DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 307 531 CG 021 693

AUTHOR Patterson, John C.
TITLE Investigator's Guide to Missing Child Cases. For Law-Enforcement Officers Locating Missing Children. Second Edition.
INSTITUTION National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, Washington, DC.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquent Prevention (Dept. of Justice), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE Oct 87
CONTRACT 86-MC-CX-K003/4
NOTE 55p.
PUB TYPE Guides - General (050)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Child Abuse; *Law Enforcement; *Missing Children; *Police; *Police Education; Runaways; Victims of Crime

ABSTRACT

This booklet provides guidance to law enforcement officers investigating missing children cases, whether through parental kidnappings, abductions by strangers, runaway or "throwaway" cases, and those in which the circumstances are unknown. The guide describes, step-by-step, the investigative process required for each of the four types of missing child cases. The guide also includes instructions on how to put information about missing children into the National Crime Information Center's computerized system. In addition, the booklet offers suggestions for forming police-social worker teams to work on missing and exploited children cases. The introduction defines types of missing child investigations and phases of case investigations. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children is described. The booklet is divided into sections on initial response, voluntary missing cases, parental kidnapping cases, nonfamily abductions, National Crime Information Center (NCIC), and police/social worker teams. The appendix includes a missing child poster format, NCIC Missing Person Report Form, NCIC Unidentified Person Report Form, Exploited/Missing Child Task Force Form, Federal Parent Locator Service Authorization Form, and a list of state clearinghouses. (ABL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED307531

NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN

Investigator's Guide to Missing Child Cases

For Law-Enforcement Officers Locating Missing Children

CG 021693

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Investigator's Guide to Missing Child Cases

For Law-Enforcement Officers Locating Missing Children

October 1987
Second Edition

John C. Patterson

© National Center for Missing & Exploited Children

Acknowledgments

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children is indebted to the following individuals—without whose knowledge and expertise this publication would not have been possible:

Detective Gary O'Connor
Lower Gwynedd Township Police Department
Lower Gwynedd Township, Pennsylvania

Lt. William Spaulding
Louisville Police Department
Louisville, Kentucky

James Scutt
Director, Victim Assistance Program
National Sheriffs' Association

Detective Frank Feichtinger
Anchorage Police Department
Anchorage, Alaska

Professor J. Kerry Rice
Kent School of Social Work
Louisville, Kentucky

Richard Ruffino
Executive Director
New Jersey Commission on Missing Persons

TECHNICAL ADVICE PROVIDED BY:

Kenneth V. Lanning, SSA
Behavioral Science Unit, Training Division, FBI Academy
Quantico, Virginia

David F. Nemecek, Section Chief
NCIC, Technical Services Division, FBI-HQ
Washington, D.C.

CONTRIBUTING STAFF FROM THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING AND EXPLOITED CHILDREN, ORIGINALLY FROM LAW-ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES AROUND THE COUNTRY:

John Rabun, Deputy Director (*Louisville, Kentucky*)
Jeanne Dillon, Supervising Technical Advisor (*Miami, Florida*)
Charles Pickett, Technical Advisor (*Richmond, Virginia*)
Scott Mandell, Technical Advisor (*Nueces County, Texas*)
Margarete Sanders, Technical Advisor (*Louisville, Kentucky*)
Janet Kosid, Director of Legal Technical Assistance (*Solano County, California*)

Prepared under Cooperative Agreement #86-MC-CX-K003/4 from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Assistance, Research, and Statistics, U. S. Department of Justice.

Points of view or opinions in this publication are those of the NCMEC and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U. S. Department of Justice.

U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Juvenile Justice and
Delinquency Prevention

Washington, D.C. 20531

Dear Reader:

In recent years, the law enforcement profession has made much progress in improving training and setting performance standards. However, missing children investigations is an area that has been somewhat neglected and underdeveloped. To help address this problem, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, in cooperative agreement with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) at the U.S. Department of Justice, developed an Investigator's Guide to Missing Child Cases.

It provides guidance to law enforcement officers investigating parental kidnappings, abductions by strangers, runaway or "throwaway" cases, and those in which the circumstances are unknown. The guide describes, step-by-step, the investigative process required for each of the four types of missing child cases.

The guide also includes instructions on how to put information about missing children into the National Crime Information Center's computerized system. In addition, the booklet offers suggestions for forming police-social worker teams to work on missing and exploited children cases.

The issue of missing and exploited children is a tragic but realistic one that we must deal with. This guide is an important tool for helping law enforcement officers who investigate such cases.

Verne L. Speirs
Administrator
Office of Juvenile Justice and
Delinquency Prevention

A Message to the Reader

This is the second edition of the *Investigator's Guide to Missing Child Cases*. We have made changes in its organization to reflect the investigative path for each kind of missing child case. Other changes have been made based on feedback received from law-enforcement users of the first edition.

Readers of this edition will recognize the National Center's continuing commitment to the principle that "No missing child case is closed until the child is located or a body is recovered and identified."

Recognizing that resource limitations may make it difficult to duplicate the approaches taken in this manual, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children encourages law-enforcement agencies to adopt as many of the recommendations as possible.

In addition, although local law and procedures may limit the authority of individual jurisdictions to implement the recommendations in this guide, a creative approach to other sources of authority may provide the officer with more jurisdiction than is traditionally thought to be available. For example, a law-enforcement officer may find that child labor laws, liquor control laws, and dependency and neglect laws can be the basis for action in a case involving a child who is voluntarily missing.

Further, the reader may note that the National Center refers to the class of missing child cases commonly known as "stranger abductions" as "nonfamily abductions." The purpose of this change in terminology is not to be creative but, rather, to avoid reinforcing the common misconceptions surrounding the notion of "stranger danger." It is not enough to warn a child not to accept candy from a "stranger." Research has demonstrated that abuse is far more likely to occur at the hands of an acquaintance or a family member. In addition, abductions by unknown individuals are frequently committed by someone who has befriended the child—even for a few minutes—and is therefore not a "stranger" *to the child*, even though he or she may be unknown to the parents.

Contents

Introduction vii
National Center for Missing and Exploited Children viii
State Clearinghouses ix
Nonprofit Organizations ix

1. Phase One: Initial Response 1
Unusual Circumstances 1
Steps in the Initial Response 2
Crime Analysis Unit 4
Summary: Initial Response 4
Initial Response Investigation Checklist 5

2. Voluntary Missing Cases 7
Intensive Investigation 7
Sustained Investigation 9
Follow-up and Close-out 10
Summary: Voluntary Missing Cases 10
Voluntary Missing Case Investigation Checklist 11

3. Parental Kidnapping Cases 13
Intensive Investigation 13
Sustained Investigation 17
Follow-up and Close-out 18
Parental Kidnapping Case Investigation Checklist 19

4. Nonfamily Abductions 21
Intensive Investigation 21
Sustained Investigation 27
Follow-up and Close-out 27
Nonfamily Abduction Case Investigation Checklist 27
Unknown Missing Cases 28

5. National Crime Information Center (NCIC) 31
Missing Persons File 31
Unidentified Persons File 32
Other NCIC System Files 33
Summary: NCIC System 33
Case History 33

6. Police/Social Worker Teams 35
Organization and Structure 35
Procedures 36
Social Worker Functions 38
Summary: Police/Social Worker Teams 38

Appendix

1. Missing Child Poster Format 39
2. NCIC Missing Person Report Form 40
3. NCIC Unidentified Person Report Form 41
4. Exploited/Missing Child Task Force Form 42
5. Federal Parent Locator Service Authorization Form 43

State Clearinghouse List (inside back cover)

Introduction

The purpose of this publication is to provide guidance to law-enforcement officers in conducting missing child investigations. Included are the recommended steps for each phase of the investigative process for each kind of missing child investigation:

Voluntary Missing This category includes those children and youths who have run away from home, as well as "throwaways"—children who have been rejected or abandoned by their families and are homeless.

Parental Kidnappings These are cases in which a parent or relative has illegally taken, kept, or concealed the missing child from another parent or legal custodian.

Abductions by Unknown Individuals or Nonfamily Members Commonly referred to as "stranger abductions," these are cases in which the child was taken, kept, or concealed by a person other than his or her parent or legal custodian.

Unknown Missing These are cases in which the child is missing and the facts of the case are insufficient to determine if the child was abducted, was the victim of an accident, or voluntarily left home.

The rationale for *law-enforcement intervention* is simple:

Missing child cases often involve a violation of the law and always involve the need to provide protection for the child. Even those youths who voluntarily leave home run the risk of becoming involved in criminal activity or exploitation through involvement in prostitution, child pornography, or with pedophile "protectors." Studies show that 85 percent of exploited children are missing when exploitation occurs.

Louisville, Kentucky, data on exploited child cases, 1981–1983

Each kind of missing child case requires appropriate investigative strategies during each of the four phases of case investigation:

Initial Response Regardless of the kind of missing child case, the initial response requires a preliminary investigation to determine the facts of the case and the structure of the subsequent investigation.

Intensive Investigation This stage begins once it has been determined that a child is missing and continues until initial lead information is exhausted and further leads have not yet developed.

Sustained Investigation The third phase consists of developing leads after the trail grows cold and following whatever leads are generated.

Follow-up and Close-out Upon location of the child or recovery and identification of the child's remains, the final stage includes steps necessary to

determine what crimes may have been committed before or during the time the child was missing; it also includes routine steps to close out case files and delete NCIC entries.

Law-enforcement agencies should not feel that they alone can meet all the demands of a missing child investigation. Other sources of help are available that can relieve the burden of the case investigation and provide assistance to the families. These sources include the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, state clearinghouses, and nonprofit missing children's organizations.

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, through its Technical Advisory staff, provides technical assistance to law-enforcement agencies handling missing child cases. Technical assistance may include arranging for media display of a missing child's photograph, forwarding lead information obtained from the National Hotline for Missing Children (toll-free: **1–800–843–5678**), or providing on-site case review at the request of the investigating law-enforcement agency.

In each kind of missing child case, the investigator should call the National Center's toll-free National Hotline and discuss the case with one of the technical advisors. Each National Center technical advisor is a former law-enforcement officer with expertise and field experience with missing child investigations.

The purpose of the National Hotline is to take information on sightings of missing children. The Center can arrange for the nationwide (and into Canada) toll-free number—**1-800-843-5678**—to be used for sighting information and can include the case in the national missing children's media programs. The 800-operators use a protocol developed by the technical advisors, consisting of about sixty specific questions that are computer supported.

All leads are reviewed by technical advisors and forwarded immediately to the law-enforcement agency on record (ORI) in NCIC and the FBI, if involved, by first-class mail, NLETS, or express service. It is important to note that the lead information obtained by the National Center is shared only with the law-enforcement agencies having responsibility for the case investigation. The National Center does *NOT* provide the information to the parents, private investigators, or the media. The National Center believes that it is important for the ORI to control access to the information. All requests for specific information concerning leads will be referred to the ORI and FBI.

To arrange for technical assistance, simply call the National Center's toll-free number, **1–800–843–5678**, and ask for a technical advisor.

State Clearinghouses

In many states, another avenue for support of missing child cases is available to law-enforcement—*state clearinghouses* for missing children. These are state agencies, often part of the state police, that were created to assist with missing child cases. Services vary from state to state, ranging from maintenance of a central registry for missing child cases to comprehensive investigative capability. Make contact with your state clearinghouse to determine its ability to support missing child case investigations *before you need the services*. In this manner, you can incorporate the clearinghouse's support, limited though it may be, in your response planning and policies and procedures. Out-of-state clearinghouses are usually very helpful in making arrangements for the return of a missing child from their jurisdiction. *Note*: A list of state clearinghouses is included on the back inside cover.

Nonprofit Organizations

Nonprofit missing children's organizations provide another source of support to which law-enforcement agencies may refer families of missing children. These organizations will assist families with poster distribution, provide peer counseling, and assist in many other areas. Most state clearinghouses have referral listings of nonprofit organizations, as does the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

Many of the nonprofit organizations have established a good relationship with the law-enforcement agencies in their communities. When dealing with a new or unknown nonprofit organization, it is important to familiarize yourself with the services provided and the background of the principals within the organization. Unfortunately, with the heightened public awareness concerning missing children, a number of well-intentioned individuals have become misdirected in their zeal to help children. Even worse are those who seek to exploit the issue of missing children for their own unethical gains.

1. Phase One: Initial Response

Dispatch a patrol officer to take the missing child report.

A missing child case should be viewed as a potential crime against a person and therefore requires a preliminary investigation to sort out the facts of the case and to structure the remainder of the investigation. A patrol officer should be dispatched promptly to take the initial report and to conduct the preliminary investigation. This is not only good police practice but has become a requirement of many state laws. When assigning the call, the dispatcher should give the responding officer the missing child's name and a description of the child's physical appearance and clothing; such information may enable the officer to locate the child en route.

There are several reasons why patrol officers should be involved in a missing child investigation. The uniformed patrol officer is the *one* person most likely to be available on a twenty-four-hour, seven-day-a-week basis and is the one likely to be familiar with the neighborhood. The following procedures require that the patrol officer make direct contact with the parents—not only because the parents need assistance at this time but also because valuable information needs to be collected for investigative purposes.

Unusual Circumstances

Immediate action is necessary under unusual circumstances.

If, during the preliminary investigation, the patrol officer determines or suspects that any of the following unusual circumstances exists, the police agency must be prepared to mobilize its available resources and take immediate action.

1. **The missing youth is thirteen years of age or younger.**

   This age is established in the federal Missing Children's Assistance Act because children of this age group have not established independence from parental control and do not have the survival skills necessary to protect themselves from exploitation on the streets.

2. **The missing youth is believed to be out of the zone of safety for his or her age and developmental stage.**

   The zone of safety will vary depending on the age of the child and his or her developmental stage. For an infant, the zone of safety will be the immediate presence of an adult custodian or the crib, stroller, or baby carriage in which the infant was placed. For a school-age child, the zone of safety might be the immediate neighborhood or the route between home and school.

3. **The missing youth is mentally incapacitated.**

   If the child is developmentally disabled or emotionally disturbed, he or she may have difficulty communicating with others about needs, identity, or address. The nature of the disability places this child in extreme danger of exploitation.

4. **The missing youth is drug dependent (including prescribed medication or "user's habit").**

   Any dependency, whether on drugs, prescription medicines, such as insulin for diabetes patients, or addictive narcotics, puts the missing child in an "at risk" category. Without regular medication, the diabetic or epileptic child's condition may become critical (life threatening), resulting in a coma or seizures. The drug abuser, on the other hand, may resort to crime or become the victim of exploitation in order to satisfy his or her habit.

5. **The missing youth is a potential victim of foul play, sexual exploitation, or is in a dangerous environment.**

   Whenever a youth is missing and there are indications of possible abduction, violence at the scene of the abduction, or signs that indicate possible sexual abuse, the child is endangered—and immediate mobilization of the police department is essential. In any dangerous environment, an immediate response is called for. "Dangerous environment" is a relative term that depends on the age and development of the child—it could be a busy highway for a toddler; it could be an all-night truck stop for a teenager.

The first consideration is to protect the child.

6. **The missing youth has been absent from home for more than twenty-four hours *before being reported to the police.***

   A parent's failure to report a missing child for twenty-four hours may be a sign of neglect or possible abuse in the family. Also, in some cases, parents may wait to contact the police because they have been told that the police department will not act on a missing child case before the child has been gone more than twenty-four hours. Unfortunately, this allows time to pass that could be crucial in recovering the child. If this occurs, the police department should take immediate action to compensate for lost time.

7. **The missing youth is believed to be with adults who could endanger the welfare of the minor.**

   Whenever there is an indication that the child may be with an adult who could exploit or otherwise place the child at risk, immediate intervention is essential. Such cases include youths with a history of running away and who have developed relationships with pimps, "chickenhawks," or drug pushers. A missing child is not simply in danger of potential sexual exploitation but may also become involved in criminal activity, such as burglary, shoplifting, or robbery.

8. **The absence is a significant deviation from established patterns of behavior that cannot be explained.**

   Most children have an established routine that is, within reasonable bounds, predictable. A major deviation from that routine is cause for concern. This is not to say that an All Points Bulletin should be issued whenever a child is a few minutes late from school; a child missing for several hours, however, should trigger a response from the investigating agency.

Any of the above criteria in a missing child case should signal the need for immediate action to minimize the danger to the child and promote a timely recovery. Such action will vary from department to department and from case to case. The following sections discuss the investigative steps for the initial response.

Steps in the Initial Response

Interview Parents Upon arriving at the scene, the patrol officer should interview both of the child's parents (separately, if possible) and try to determine if the

child has been abducted by a stranger or the other parent or has left home voluntarily. The officer should always determine the legal custody status of the child. The officer should ask the parents who saw the child last and should obtain a list of the child's friends—with addresses. Great care should be taken to ensure the correct spelling of the missing child's full name and any nicknames (AKAs), the exact date of birth, sex, and race. This information is vital for entry, then later query, into the National Crime Information Center Missing Persons File (NCIC-MPF). Parents should immediately report a child's disappearance; if they have not, the officer should find out why.

Make sure that the information is complete and accurate.

Note Everyone Present at the Scene The first officer arriving at the scene or at the child's home should write down the names of everyone present, as well as those who are searching. Identities should be verified using driver's licenses or other photo identification. These people may provide leads to the identity of the abductor if later investigation determines that an abduction took place. As in arson cases, the abductor often will return to volunteer to assist in the search in order to monitor the progress being made on the case.

Physical Description/Photo A complete description of the child should be obtained from the parents, including the clothing the child was wearing and any handicaps, scars, or other identifying characteristics, such as braces on the teeth or pierced ears. This information should be broadcast in a "Be on the Lookout" Bulletin. The broadcast should explain what action is requested if the child is found, such as "locate and detain," "check safety and welfare," etc.

In addition, the patrol officer should obtain several recent photographs of the child and find out from the parents if the child had been fingerprinted and if dental charts and medical records are available for possible future use. If the child is believed to be in the company of another person, the police should obtain a description of that person and of the possible vehicle used.

Search the Home The patrol officer responding to a missing child report should request permission to search the home. It is not unusual to find a missing child at home, even after the parents have conducted a search before calling the police. In fact, a later search by a second officer may be useful. The searches should be thorough, including closets, piles of clothes, under beds, in crawl spaces, attics, and other storage spaces, in large boxes, in old refrigerators—in short, anywhere a child could crawl into or hide and possibly be asleep or not be able to get out. While conducting the search, the officer should be alert for other clues that may indicate foul play or possible reasons for the child's disappearance.

Search areas where a child of that age might be able to go.

Talk with Family Members Other family members living in the home may provide valuable insight into the circumstances surrounding a missing child case. If possible, interview other family members individually and away from the parents.

Brothers and sisters may know of friends unknown to the parents. Other family members should be asked if the child spoke of running away or of suicide; they may also know the last time the child was seen. Siblings may be able to indicate the presence of physical or sexual abuse within the family. *Caution*: In exploring the possibility of abuse with other members of the family, the officer should be as tactful as possible. The officer taking the report should be inquisitive, yet professional and sensitive. Some interviews may have to be done privately in order to obtain true information. During the interviews with the parents and with other family members, the officer must not impart false hopes or fears.

File Report with NCIC Assuming that the child was not recovered during the investigation related to the initial response, the investigating agency should *immediately* file a report with the National Crime Information Center (NCIC). This report should be filed in *all* missing child cases upon confirmation of a missing child. All missing children, including runaways, can and should be

entered in the NCIC system *without* any waiting period. It is *not* necessary for custody to be determined before entering the child into the NCIC Missing Persons File. Providing the parents with a copy of the NCIC printout may be reassuring to them, and it will give them an opportunity to verify the accuracy of the information entered into the NCIC system.

Many police departments historically have had policies establishing a waiting period. Such policies should be abolished because they may increase police liability, greatly diminish the effectiveness of the system, and hinder the ability of other departments to identify and return the child to the family. Reproductions of the NCIC Missing Persons File form and the NCIC Unidentified Persons File form are found in Appendix 2 and Appendix 3, pages 40–41.

Develop a Case File All information developed as part of the preliminary investigation and also supplemental information should be placed in the master case file. This file should include the missing persons report taken by the patrol officer dispatched to the home or to the scene of the abduction; pictures of the child, or a memorandum indicating that none were available; a hard copy of the NCIC entry into the Missing Persons File; and supplemental reports with statements of witnesses, family, and friends. It is critical to the management of a missing child case to have this information in a central repository. As additional information is gathered, the master file should be updated. A copy of the NCIC printout should be placed in the file whenever supplemental information is entered into NCIC.

Crime Analysis Unit

Crime analysis can help build the case.

The crime analysis unit should be involved in preparing case review information on the missing child to determine if the youth has been identified on Field Interview (FI) cards with other youths or adults or has been involved with drugs or activities that could produce information sources.

The crime analysis unit should also help search for previous missing youth patterns in the area where the youth lived or was seen last. A person-pattern analysis should be made between the missing youth and known offenders in the area to find any cross patterns that develop investigative focus or provide clues for investigative activity.

The unit should establish a tip file to organize possible leads and to prevent duplication of investigation by different shift investigators.

In addition, the crime analysis unit should provide case enhancement information, including a victim file, school incidents file, field interrogations information, a suspicious vehicle file, and suspicious persons file. The crime analysis unit should act as the focal point of information exchange relevant to the missing child case.

Summary: Initial Response

Information captured initially is vital to later strategy.

The initial response to the report of a missing child should be to dispatch an officer to the child's home or to the scene of the disappearance. The purpose of the preliminary investigation is to sort out the facts of the case as they are known and to use them to structure the rest of the investigation. The investigating officer should look for any unusual circumstances warranting an immediate, intensive response to protect the child. Upon arriving at the scene, the officer should interview the parents and obtain a description to be broadcast as a "Be on the Lookout" Bulletin. In addition, the officer should obtain a recent photograph of the missing child, interview other family members, and search the child's home. If these steps do not recover the child, a report of the missing child should *immediately* be entered into the NCIC Missing Persons File and a master case file established.

Once the police have received the initial report and have determined that the child is missing, the case enters the next phases. During these phases, the responsibility for the ongoing investigation is assigned to another investigator or to the officer who made the initial report. Every missing child case requires that a law-enforcement officer be assigned to lead the investigation, coordinate the search, follow up on leads as they come in, and be held accountable for the active investigation of the case. The processes used are outlined in the following chapters and will differ depending on the kind of missing child case being investigated.

Initial Response Investigation Checklist

☐ **Take initial description.**
- Name
- Clothing worn
- Physical appearance

☐ **Dispatch patrol officer.**

☐ **Broadcast description.**

☐ **Interview parents.**
- What is the correct spelling of the child's name?
- What is the correct date of birth?
- What nicknames does the child have?
- Who has custody?
- Who saw the child last?
- Where was the child last seen?
- When was the child noticed to be missing?
- Who are the child's friends and their addresses?
- Verify physical description provided in broadcast.
- Are there any unusual circumstances?

☐ **Note everyone present at the scene.**
- Name?
- Photo identification?

☐ **Search the home.**
- Get permission from the parents to search the home.
- Look in any place a child might be able to crawl into or hide.
- Be alert to signs of violence or foul play.
- Have a second officer search if the child is not found.

☐ **Interview other family members.**
- Did the child talk about running away or suicide?
- What places did the child frequent?
- Were there any family problems affecting the child?
- Did the child use drugs or alcohol?
- Were there any school problems?
- When and where was the last time each family member saw the child?
- Was there anyone with the child when last seen?

☐ **File a missing persons report with NCIC-MPF immediately upon verification that the child is missing.**
- If the child is believed to be endangered (if any "unusual circumstances" exist), enter in "Endangered" category in NCIC-MPF.
- Use "Miscellaneous" section to enter information about suspected abductor as well as warrant information.
- Using NCIC printout, verify date of birth and *exact* spelling of name.

☐ **Assign case to lead investigator.**

☐ **Seek crime analysis unit assistance.**

Produce case enhancement file:
- Victim file
  - Field interrogation contacts
  - School incidents reports
  - Child abuse reports
- Suspicious vehicle file
- Suspicious persons file
- Tip file

☐ **Disseminate relevant case information.**

2. Voluntary Missing Cases

The largest portion of missing child cases falls into the category of *voluntary missing* or *runaways*. Fortunately, most of these cases resolve themselves in a short period of time, often causing investigative agencies to take a somewhat casual attitude. The frequency of these cases often leads law-enforcement agencies to treat every disappearance of an adolescent as "just another runaway." Neither the possibility of quick resolution nor the high incidence of voluntary missing cases absolves the law-enforcement agency from conducting an investigation, filing an NCIC missing persons report, or actively pursuing the recovery of the child. No matter what the age of the child, the agency should take swift and vigorous action if any of the unusual circumstances (*see* pages 1–2) exist.

Intensive Investigation

During this phase of the investigation of a voluntary missing child case, the focus is on the life style, family and peer relationships, and the emotional state of the missing youth. The following sections discuss suggested investigative trails.

Use family members to collect information.

Family Involvement Family members are a vital source of information and should be used for the collection of information that may assist law-enforcement agencies to identify the runaway youth if he or she is located or taken into custody. Parents should be given the task of collecting the medical and dental information to be entered into the NCIC Missing Persons File (NCIC-MPF). The NCIC-MPF is described in detail on pages 31–32. Parents should be asked to get in touch with out-of-town relatives who may be contacted by the youth.

Parents should have a flier or poster of the missing youth printed and distributed. Law-enforcement agencies should assist in the preparation of these fliers. Other sources of help to prepare and distribute posters are the nonprofit organizations (NPOs) providing support to families of missing children. Some state clearinghouses are required by law to print fliers to assist in the location of missing children. See page 39 for a recommended poster format with the information that should be included. In cases in which the child is thought to be a runaway, posters should be distributed to truck stops, youth-oriented businesses, other law-enforcement agencies, and youth service agencies: Focus on where the child is likely to go.

Family members should be instructed to contact the police department immediately if the child returns home and to relay any new information to the officer assigned to the case.

Interviewing Friends During the initial response phase, parents and other family members were asked to provide lists of the child's friends. These friends and their families now need to be contacted to determine if the missing youth is staying with one of them, or if they know the whereabouts of the youth. When interviewing the friends of the missing child, the investigating officer must convey nonjudgmental concern for the welfare of the child. Any perceived hostility may result in deceptive and evasive responses. Friends should be

questioned about any problems the runaway may have been facing either at home or at school, including personal relationships and drug or alcohol abuse. Asking the question, "Do you think (____name____) is safe?" may generate a response that indicates more knowledge than admitted to previously. Friends also may be able to identify "hangouts" of which the parents were not aware.

Focus on where the child is likely to go.

Patrol Searches The law-enforcement agency should reproduce a photograph of the runaway, if available, and distribute copies to patrol units. If the law-enforcement agency cannot have the photograph duplicated, the parents should be asked to have it copied. Nonprofit organizations may also be able to reproduce the photo. Patrol officers assigned to areas with shopping malls, electronic game arcades, or other gathering places for young people should check these areas and determine if the youth has been seen or if his or her whereabouts are known. The police should also check truck stops and bus stations, and they should distribute photographs of the missing youth as well as the telephone number of the investigating agency to ticket agents and other staff.

Developing Investigative Leads In order to work a voluntary missing case adequately, the investigator should learn as much about the missing youth as possible. Information should be gathered about the youth's life style, schooling, employment, hobbies, or other aspects of his or her life that may give an indication of survival techniques the youth may use.

Runaway children need food to eat, a place to sleep, and a means to sustain themselves over a period of time. It is important to know the resources available to the youth. Does he or she have a bank account? If so, where? How much money is in it? Have there been withdrawals or has the account been closed out recently? What other sources of money are available to the youth? Have these been used? Was any money taken from the house when the child left? Did the child take more clothes or belongings than normally needed on any given day? Does it appear that the youth planned to run away for a period of time or was it on the spur of the moment? The answers to each of these questions can be important clues in analyzing the mental state of the youth and probable actions after leaving home.

The lead investigator should interact effectively with other units in the department. It is particularly important that vice and intelligence officers be made aware of the case and obtain photographs of the youth. As previously stated, runaways and other missing children are prime targets for sexual and criminal exploitation.

The purpose is to locate the child—not to uncover contraband.

If the youth attends school, the school should be contacted and asked to inform the lead investigator—not the parents—of the youth's return to school. In addition, the school should be told to contact the police if it receives requests for the student's school records. School authorities and the police may be able to open the student's lockers and examine the contents. The purpose of this search is to obtain information about the possible whereabouts of the child, not about the contents of the student's locker. School officials may feel more comfortable if this search is performed with parental permission. *Note:* You may even need to obtain a search warrant, depending upon the local school district's policies. Notebooks and texts at school and at home should be searched for names, addresses, and telephone numbers.

The investigator should interview teachers and other school personnel to determine the existence of any unusual school problems that could provide a motive for running away. They should be questioned about behavior, indications of drug usage, attendance patterns, and peers. If the missing child has had frequent absences, the investigator should check on the attendance of close friends, including boyfriends or girlfriends. The emergence of any patterns warrants follow-up investigation. It is important to find out if the youths were together when the absences occurred and, if so, where they may have been and what they were doing. If they played "hooky" together, they may have a secret hiding place that the runaway is using. A young person is highly unlikely to run away without telling a close friend in advance or contacting the friend later.

While federal law prohibits the use of Social Security data to locate a missing person, Social Security numbers have become as commonplace as driver's license numbers and student identification numbers and are necessary to receive public assistance. The creative use of a teenager's Social Security number by the investigator may help to resolve the case.

The investigator should contact the child abuse registry of the child protective services to determine whether the child had been reported as a suspected victim of child abuse. This is a good example of the need for establishing good working relationships with child welfare agencies. The investigator should also examine physician's records for indications of child abuse. An NCIC and local criminal history check should be made on the parents to find any indications of past child abuse or molestation.

The investigator should contact hospitals and other health care facilities, provide them with a copy of the youth's photograph, and ask them to notify the police if the youth seeks medical assistance. In case of post-pubescent females, the investigator should consider the possibility of pregnancy and abortion and should contact planned parenthood facilities or other similar services. The longer a youth remains a runaway, the more likely he or she will be sexually exploited and thereby exposed to sexually transmitted disease. Clinics for sexually transmitted disease should be informed routinely about runaway youths. Such facilities may not be able to contact the parents or the police due to the confidential nature of the services they provide, but they may counsel the youth to make such a contact. Such clinics should also be informed of their responsibility to report child abuse—if they have reason to believe that an adult was responsible for the sexual abuse of a minor.

Summary: Intensive Investigation of Voluntary Missing Cases Despite the fact that most voluntary missing cases resolve themselves in a short period of time, it is important that the police maintain a thorough investigation until the case is resolved. The runaway is a child at risk of being exploited or becoming involved in crime and therefore is a legitimate law-enforcement responsibility.

Research indicates that 10 percent of runaways are sexually exploited while missing.

Just as in any other kind of investigation, the case should be assigned to an officer to investigate and follow up. The department's resources, including patrol officers and special units such as vice or intelligence, should be informed of and involved in the investigative process. Parental participation should be used fully to gather much of the information necessary for completing the NCIC file on the case. Friends and school officials should be interviewed in an attempt to determine the mental state of the youth, the motives for running away, and possible whereabouts. Health care facilities and clinics should be contacted and asked to assist if their services are sought by the youth.

The investigator should consider the skills and resources the youth has for surviving and what implications these may have for the investigation. The case will always remain open and active unless the missing child has been located (or the body recovered).

Sustained Investigation

In the early stages of the investigation, the parents should collect medical and dental information to enter into the NCIC system. After a child has been missing for thirty days, the investigator assigned to the case should make sure that all relevant information is fully entered into the NCIC system.

Maintain contact with the family.

The investigator should keep in touch on a routine basis with the friends and the family of the child. Parents should be instructed again about notifying the investigator if the child returns home. Contact should not be limited to the immediate family. Aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents, including those who live in other areas, should be consulted as well. The investigator may want to send an official, preprinted postcard to these relatives with instructions about what to do and the telephone number to call if contacted by the missing youth. The

postcard should include a statement that, unless requested by the youth, the parents will not be contacted until after the child talks with the police. This is standard procedure to give the youth an opportunity to address any problems of concern. (The reason that the postcard should be preprinted is to depersonalize some of the information and thereby make it less threatening to the family.)

The investigating officer should question the network of friends and associates about any contact with the youth. The longer the period of absence, the more likely it is that the youth will get in touch with friends. It is possible that the runaway will return to the community after the initial investigation. Therefore, vice officers and other units within the department should be reapprised of the case on a regular basis. Patrol officers should revisit video game arcades, shopping malls, and other "hangouts" where the youth may go.

The only way to determine if a lead exists is to look for one.

Follow-up and Close-out

Traditionally, the approach taken when a runaway has been found has been to return the child to the home and expect the child to run away again. To try to prevent this, upon the recovery of the runaway the investigator should consider three different aspects of the situation:

Be sure to delete the NCIC-MPF entry when the child is recovered.

Why did the child leave home? In exploring this area, the investigator needs to be sensitive to possible physical or sexual abuse in the home. Indications of any form of abuse demand an investigation.

What happened during the time the child was missing? If the child was missing for any substantial period of time, it is important to learn what the child was doing to survive. Current statistics show that 10 percent of runaways are sexually exploited during the time they are missing. Other forms of exploitation, such as involvement with drug distribution and other kinds of criminal activity, can occur. Getting the youth to talk about these experiences can provide valuable intelligence and leads for immediate arrests.

Refer the family to community services.

What can be done for the youth now? There are a multitude of social problems that cause youngsters to leave home, not all of which are law-enforcement responsibilities. The law-enforcement officer handling the runaway case should be familiar with programs in the community that can help families resolve their problems. Such programs include mental health counseling, teenage pregnancy counseling, school social work counseling, residential care, and family counseling. A physical examination is needed to ensure the health and well being of the child.

Once the missing child has been fully interviewed and the investigator is satisfied that the child will not be endangered if returned to the home, the family can be reunited or the proper referral made to a social service agency. The case can then be closed.

Summary: Voluntary Missing Cases

Just as in any missing child case, law-enforcement involvement is warranted to extend protection to the child and to the community. The focus for the investigation of the voluntary missing case is the life style of the child—what resources are available for the child's survival while missing? Does the child have money, friends, and relatives to help support him or her while missing? What is known about the emotional state of the child? These are all important aspects of the investigation of this kind of case.

It is important to follow up on all leads and to continue to seek leads as the case proceeds. Do not make the mistake of assuming because the child had not been in contact with his or her family earlier that as the need to survive becomes more acute the contact will be made later. Continued contact needs to be maintained in case the child comes back and the family neglects to notify the police department.

Within thirty days of the child's disappearance, all information should be fully loaded into the NCIC Missing Persons File. This includes dental and medical information, fingerprints (if available), and a physical description to enable forensic matching should a body be recovered or the child is unable to identify himself or herself.

Once the child is recovered, three questions should be standard operating procedure: 1) "Why did you go?" 2) "What happened while you were gone?" and 3) "How can we help now?" The child should not be returned home until the investigator is satisfied that the child will be safe from harm. Referrals to child welfare agencies may be necessary.

Voluntary Missing Case Investigation Checklist

☐ **Give parents tasks.**

Collect child's medical and dental records.

Contact out-of-town relatives.

☐ **Assist parents in developing, printing, and distributing poster of missing child.**

☐ **Refer parents to National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and local nonprofit missing/runaway children's organizations.**

☐ **Interview friends.**

Determine if whereabouts of missing child are known to friends or friends' families.

Ask about problems the child may have been encountering—home, school, boyfriend/girlfriend, drugs, alcohol—in neutral, nonjudgmental manner.

Ask about "hangouts."

☐ **Obtain patrol involvement.**

Provide patrol units in area with picture and description of youth.

Units in areas of youth "hangouts" should be alerted to all cases of runaway youths.

Distribute pictures of missing child to train and bus stations and truck stops.

☐ **Determine life style of missing youth.**

Focus on the life style of the missing youth.

What survival skills or resources does the youth have?

Has the child run away before—where did he or she go?

Does the child have money? Is the bank alerted?

Was the episode planned in advance or was it spontaneous?

☐ **Seek information and assistance from other units in the department, especially vice and intelligence.**

☐ **Check with school officials.**

Search school lockers.

Check school attendance records and those of close friends.

Inquire about school observations of:

Peer relationships

Changes in behavior

Possible explanations of the disappearance

☐ **Check child abuse registry.**

☐ **Contact hospitals and other health facilities.**

Provide copy of poster of missing youth.

Remind them of their child abuse reporting responsibility.

☐ **After thirty days, fully load NCIC Missing Persons File with all available information:**

Fingerprint classifications and dental records

Identifying physical characteristics

☐ **Conduct case review to determine if the child should be listed in the "endangered category" of NCIC.**

☐ **Maintain contact with the friends and family of the child.**

Contact out-of-town as well as local relatives of the child and ask them to notify the investigator if contacted by the youth.

Recontact friends to determine if the youth has had contact with them.

☐ **Maintain contact with the patrol, vice, and intelligence units within the department.**

☐ **Upon recovery of the child (even if the child returns home voluntarily), interview the child.**

Determine why the child left.

What happened while the child was missing?

What can the department do to help the youth now?

☐ **Delete the case from NCIC.**

3. Parental Kidnapping Cases

The second most common missing child case is *parental kidnapping*. This kind of case involves the abduction of a child by a noncustodial parent or the concealment of a child after the end of a legal visitation period. Depending on the state, parental kidnapping may also include interference with court-mandated visitations. Many law-enforcement agencies underestimate the seriousness of parental kidnapping, claiming that the problem is basically one of intra-familial conflict. The fact is that parental kidnappings often put the abducted child at risk. In addition to being uprooted from a home and being deprived of the other parent, the abducting parent forces the child to spend a life on the run, often under circumstances that constitute willful neglect.

Most states have recognized the seriousness of parental kidnapping by enacting legislation making child snatching a felony offense. Because state laws vary regarding the process required to bring charges against abductor parents, it is extremely important that each police department and sheriff's office establish written policies with the prosecutor's office on handling these cases, based upon their own state laws.

Parental kidnapping is a crime in every state and the District of Columbia.

Intensive Investigation

Law-enforcement agencies have had a fair amount of success in their searches for parentally kidnapped children. Investigations of such cases are often easier than other kinds because the abductor is known and because abducting parents usually are not skillful at eluding their seekers.

Verifying Custody Parental kidnappings are complex emotional situations requiring the investigating officer to know the state statute and to sort through much extraneous information in order to determine if, *in fact*, a crime was committed. A good starting place is the verification of the custody arrangements as ordered by the court, if a custody decree has been filed. The court clerk in the court where the custody decree was entered can confirm any changes in the order. A temporary change in custody could have been ordered *ex parte* without the searching parent's knowledge. Another source for confirming custody arrangements is the attorney of the searching parent. Obtain a certified copy of the custody order and keep it in your file. Check also for the existence of conflicting custody decrees in any jurisdiction to which the abductor is discovered to have fled.

Many parental kidnappings occur prior to the filing of a custody decree. In these cases, the police agency should be guided by their policies and procedures and by the decisions of the prosecutor's office. Actually, under some state statutes, a crime is committed even if the child is taken before a custody order is filed.

NCIC Reporting Once a parental kidnapping report has been made, the law-enforcement agency has the responsibility to investigate the report, determine if the facts uncovered indicate a violation of the law and, if so, locate the child. The

Enter the abductor into the Wanted Persons File—enter the child in the Missing Persons File.

child should be listed in the Missing Persons File of the NCIC system whether or not a warrant for criminal custodial interference will be issued. The child should not be listed in the Wanted Persons File.

If a felony warrant is issued for the arrest of the abducting parent, it should be entered in the NCIC Wanted Persons File. The entry of the warrant information into the NCIC system should cross reference the missing persons report, and vice versa. Remember, another officer from a different department may query NCIC on the parent *or* on the child. *Cross referencing* lets that officer know to look for *two* individuals, not just the one presently being asked about. Enter information about conflicting custody orders or special instructions about picking up the child in the "Miscellaneous" field.

Records Examination As quickly as possible after the complaint has been filed, the police should request the prosecutor to obtain a subpoena or search warrant to examine the abducting parent's telephone records, bank statements, credit card records, and telephone records of friends or relatives thought to be in contact with the abductor. The examination of these records can lead to the location of the parent and has assisted in the solution of numerous parental kidnapping cases. Establishing criteria with the prosecutor and judges will facilitate obtaining the necessary warrants for the records checks. Depending upon the job of the abducting parent, union records may provide a good lead. If the occupation requires the use of an intermediary or agent, the police should examine those records. The police should contact the abductor's last employer to trace the person through records of reference requests or from the mailing of tax records such as the W-2 form.

Also check airline passenger lists.

Federal Assistance Assistance in locating and recovering the child may be obtained from the FBI, the U.S. Postal Service, the U.S. State Department, and the U.S. Department of Defense.

File felony charges, if possible, in order to get a UFAP warrant.

If there is reason to believe that the abductor has crossed state lines, and there has been a *felony warrant* issued, the United States Attorney can issue a federal Unlawful Flight to Avoid Prosecution (UFAP) warrant. In order to gain the cooperation of the U.S. Attorney, the local authorities must write a letter that states an intention to extradite the abductor and should enclose a certified copy of the felony warrant. Thus, if the investigator has discretion in determining the degree of crime charged, he or she should consider the advantage of filing a felony in obtaining a UFAP warrant. Once the UFAP warrant has been issued, the FBI is permitted to assist in the search for the abductor, to make the arrest, and to turn the abductor over to the state authorities for extradition and prosecution. Parents should be made aware that the FBI will *not* pick up the child and return the child to the searching parent. Other arrangements need to be made for the child. A UFAP warrant will not be issued if the abductor's whereabouts are known, since extradition can be accomplished without the assistance of the FBI.

If law-enforcement authorities have reason to believe that friends or relatives of the abductor are maintaining contact through the mails, the U.S. Postal Service, through the postal inspectors, may request that a "cover" be placed on the mail being sent to the friends' or relatives' addresses. This means that the Postal Service will record the return addresses of mail being received by the friends or relatives before the mail is delivered. The person receiving the mail would be unaware of the interception for a specified period of time. Postal inspectors may be able to provide information from change-of-address forms.

The U.S. Department of State's Office of Citizens Consular Services can conduct a "welfare and whereabouts" search to locate a child and determine the physical condition of the child if he or she has been taken from the country. Such requests should be made to the Office of Citizens Consular Services, Room 4811, Department of State, Washington, D.C. 20520, or by telephone at (202) 647–3444. The State Department also may block the issuance of a passport for a missing child, if requested.

Another source of assistance for children thought to be taken out of the country is Interpol. Contact may be made through:

Interpol
United States Central Bureau
U.S. Department of Justice
Shoreham Building, Room 800
Washington, D.C. 20530
(202) 272–8383
Alien Fugitive Section
ORI DCINTER00

If the abductor is a member of or employed by a military service, the branch of the military service should be asked to provide, through the Worldwide Locator Service, the most recent duty assignment. The service will need the abductor's full name, Social Security number, date of birth, and last known duty assignment. Following are the addresses and telephone numbers of the military locator services:

UNITED STATES ARMY
Worldwide Locator Service
U.S. Army Personnel Service Support Center
Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana 46249
(317) 542–4211

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE AND AIR FORCE RESERVE
Air Force Military Personnel Center
Attn.: Worldwide Locator
Randolf AFB
San Antonio, Texas 78150
(512) 652–5774
(512) 652–5775

UNITED STATES NAVY AND NAVAL RESERVE
Naval Military Personnel Command N036
Navy Worldwide Locator Service
Washington, D.C. 20370
(202) 694–3155
(202) 694–9221
(202) 694–5011

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS AND MARINE CORPS RESERVE
Commandant of the Marine Corps—MMRB-10
Headquarters, Marine Corps
Attn.: Worldwide Locator Service
Washington, D.C. 20380
(202) 694–1624
(202) 694–1861
(202) 694–1610
(202) 694–1913

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
Coast Guard Locator Service
Room 4502 (if the inquiry pertains to enlisted or reserve personnel)
Room 4208 (if the inquiry pertains to officers)
2100 2nd Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20593
(202) 267–1615 (enlisted)
(202) 267–1667 (officers)
(202) 267–0547 (reserves)

If the abductor parent is a member of either the Army or Air National Guard, the State Adjutant General for the state in which the person is a guardsman maintains personnel records.

If the abductor is a retired military or retired civil service employee and receives a retirement check, a court order should be obtained for examination of

the records of the Office of Personnel Management, 1900 E Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20415, to determine a current address.

Send for the National Center's handbook on parental kidnapping.

Parental Kidnapping Guide The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children has available, at no cost, copies of a handbook entitled *Parental Kidnapping*. This manual is designed to provide step-by-step guidance in resolving parental kidnapping cases in both the criminal and civil justice systems. These manuals are appropriate for both law-enforcement and searching parents. Please contact the National Center at **1-800-843-5678** to request a copy.

Do not block a school records transfer.

Records of Child Many children are found through school and birth records. If the child is of school age, the abductor parent may request school records. THIS TRANSFER SHOULD NOT BE BLOCKED. Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the school *must* inform the parents upon request where the records have been sent and the name of the requesting school. A school refusing to give the information within a reasonable time can lose state and federal government aid. Because this law relates to the rights of the family to receive information, the searching parent should be encouraged to use the FERPA provisions.

In the case of a child younger than school age, a parent may have to confirm innoculations for childhood diseases in order to enter a child into a daycare program. The medical records of the child should be "flagged" so that any request for the records will trigger a notification to law-enforcement authorities.

If the the abducting parent is taking the child out of the country or enrolling the child in school, the birth certificate may be needed. The Bureau of Vital Statistics or other record repositories should be asked to contact the police if a request is made for a copy of the birth certificate. Some states have enacted laws that provide for the "flagging" of birth certificates and school records to assist law-enforcement agencies in recovering parentally kidnapped children.

Posters See Appendix 1, page 39 for the format of a missing child poster. These can be very effective in the location and recovery of a parentally abducted child. It is important to note that after a warrant is obtained for the arrest of the abducting parent, the poster should include a photograph of the abductor as well as descriptive information.

Interviewing the Abductor Parent Whenever there is an accusation of a parental kidnapping or concealment, the accused parent should be located, if possible, and interviewed by a police officer. The purpose of the interview is to determine if the accused parent has physical custody of the child and to find out the condition of the child. Until the location of the child has been confirmed and the safety of the child ascertained directly by the officer, the child should be considered missing and at risk. Even if the accused parent has the child, the validity of the complaint may still be at issue under statute or court order. The investigator should obtain a court order before the interview in order to deal with a situation in which the abductor might be provoked into fleeing.

Summary: Intensive Investigation of Parental Kidnapping Cases The first responsibility of the law-enforcement agency in a suspected parental kidnapping case is to determine the missing child's location and ensure the safety of the child. Parental kidnapping cases are often legally complex and complicated by emotional conflicts between the child's parents. If there is a question of the custody status of the missing child, the searching parent should be referred to the prosecutor or the case handled according to the established, written policies and procedures of the law-enforcement agency. Once a complaint has been filed, the law-enforcement agency has the responsibility to investigate a parental kidnapping as it would any other criminal act.

If parental kidnapping can be treated as a felony under the laws of the state, the local police agency has many tools to assist in the investigation. NCIC is a

vital tool. The abductor should be listed in the Wanted Persons File and the child in the Missing Persons File. Other federal resources are also available to help locate the abductor parent.

Sustained Investigation

In some parental kidnapping cases the investigator may find it easier to locate the abducting parent after the case has settled down and the abducting parent has resumed a more normal life. If the person receives pension checks, public assistance, Social Security checks, or other payments that can be tracked, the endorsed checks should be examined to determine where they were cashed or deposited. The investigator should examine credit bureau records on a regular basis to trace any loan applications the abductor may have filed.

The more time that passes, the more likely it is that the abductor parent will reestablish contact with parents and other family members, use whatever money may be deposited in the bank, and resume a normal life. The bank should be asked to "flag" the accounts, not block the transactions, and to notify the investigator if money is drawn from the abductor's bank. If the abductor makes the withdrawal in person, the bank should attempt to stall him or her and notify the police. If felony charges have been filed against the abductor parent, the investigator should ask the postal inspectors to conduct a mail "cover" for close relatives or friends.

The employer or former employer of the abductor should be contacted and asked to notify the investigator if the fugitive parent requests a reference or sends an address for forwarding pension fund deposits. Again, the employer should handle these requests routinely so as not to alert the abductor parent. Professional or occupational licensing authorities should be requested to contact the investigator if they receive any inquiries about the credentials of the abductor.

Parent Locator Services Investigators may find the *Federal Parent Locator Service (FPLS)* useful. Information generated, even though dated, may provide valuable leads. The Federal Parent Locator Service is maintained by the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The FPLS conducts computerized searches for address information on absent parents among data bases maintained by various federal agencies, including the Selective Service, Internal Revenue Service, Social Security Administration, Department of Defense, Coast Guard, and National Personnel Records Center of the General Services Administration. The abductor's Social Security number is needed to search these files. If the Social Security number is not known, investigators will have to provide additional information to obtain it.

Although the FBI and the U.S. Attorney can go directly to the FPLS for these record checks in federal custodial interference cases (state felony cases for which federal UFAP warrants have also been issued), access by state officials is slightly more limited. "Authorized persons" at the state level may initiate an FPLS inquiry, but they must process their paperwork through the state parent locator service (SPLS).

Each state maintains its own parent locator service with access to such state agencies as the state DMV, state labor department, state taxing authority, etc., as part of its state child support enforcement program. Use of the state parent locator service may be limited by law to cases of child support establishment/enforcement. If a state has entered into a contract with the Federal Parent Locator Service to provide "locator" services, however, the SPLS will forward the requests of state "authorized persons" to the FPLS. At this writing, 47 states have entered into such an agreement with the FPLS. Some of those 47 states have also amended their legislation to allow the state parent locator service to process requests in cases of custodial interference or parental kidnapping.

When using the FPLS or the SPLS, the investigator must realize that the data bases are not current and may not be updated for several months. Even if the information is in the data base, the investigator may not receive it until forty to sixty days after making the inquiry. This means that the investigator may need to request a search every six months. OCSE charges a nominal fee for the data base search. As policies vary between states, the investigator should contact the SPLS in his or her state to determine law-enforcement access.

Parents are not permitted to initiate inquiries on their own behalf. In order to use the services of the FPLS for parental kidnapping and child custody cases, the searching parent must contact an "authorized person" in his or her state of residence. The FBI or a United States Attorney can initiate a search where a federal warrant (Unlawful Flight to Avoid Prosecution) has been issued.

An *authorized person* is 1) any agent or attorney of any state having a parental kidnapping agreement and having the duty or authority under the law of such state to enforce a child custody determination, 2) any court of a state having a parental kidnapping agreement having jurisdiction to make or enforce such a child custody determination, or any agent of such court, and 3) any agent or attorney of the United States, or of a state with a parental kidnapping agreement who has the duty or authority to investigate, enforce, or bring a prosecution with respect to the unlawful taking or restraint of a child.

The procedures for obtaining authorization from a state judge, attorney, or police officer will vary from state to state, but in some states many "authorized persons" are not aware that the FPLS can be used in parental kidnapping cases. Following are some general procedures on how a state attorney, judge, or police officer can obtain authorization to use the FPLS or SPLS.

In order to authorize the use of FPLS or SPLS, the police officer or prosecutor should to write a letter or sign an authorization form. (*See* sample form in Appendix, page 43). This form should indicate that this is a legitimate parental kidnapping or child custody case and should request that the local child support agency submit the case to the FPLS to locate the whereabouts of the abductor. In cases where state law allows, also request that the SPLS process the request through state agency records.

Caution: In cases in which criminal charges of parental kidnapping are not appropriate, the police or prosecuting attorney may not be able to authorize the use of the FPLS. It *is* possible, however, to use the FPLS in civil child custody cases. In these cases, the *authorized person* is a state judge or other "agent of the court" or any agent or attorney of a state with the authority or duty of enforcing child custody determinations. Information received from the FPLS or SPLS is for official use only.

Load complete information into NCIC within 30 days.

NCIC Update In most parental kidnapping cases, investigators should expect to recover a live child. In some cases, however, the abducting parent is enraged at the other parent, is an alcoholic or drug abuser, has a history of child abuse, or is otherwise mentally unbalanced; under such circumstances, the child is endangered and may be killed. If the child has been missing for thirty days, the NCIC file should be fully loaded with all medical and dental information about the child. This will aid in identification should the child become a homicide victim.

Follow-up and Close-out

When a law-enforcement agency is involved in the recovery of a child in a parental kidnapping case, there are two issues that must be considered. The first involves the arrest of the abducting parent. Preferably the abductor parent should not be taken into custody in the presence of the child. But if the child is present at the time of arrest, an officer should take a few minutes to explain to the child what is happening. The child should be told that the arrest is proper and necessary—the abducting parent has broken the law and the child is not to blame.

Many children will feel guilty because the parent was arrested. Such a reaction is normal but the officer should try to help the child deal with this feeling.

The second issue is the immediate disposition of the child. The child may be several thousand miles away from the custodial parent. Arranging their reunion will take time and careful planning. The state clearinghouse in the state in which the child was located may be helpful in formulating these plans. Depending on the laws of the particular state, a pickup order for the child may be necessary and should be obtained before to the arrest of the abductor parent.

Plan ahead in order to return the child to the custodial parent.

A close working relationship with the agency providing child protective services (CPS) is necessary so that temporary shelter care can be provided. The provider of the shelter care should understand that the child may be released only to a CPS worker or to the police. The abducting parent must not be given information about the location of the child at this time. There have been cases in which the abducting parent has been released on bond and attempted to abduct the child again.

As in the case of the recovered runaway, the recovered victim of parental kidnapping should be interviewed to determine if abuse occurred during the abduction, or, as is often alleged by the abductor parent, during the time the child was living with the custodial parent. The appropriate child protective services agency should be notified of any suspected abuse by either parent, and an investigation should be initiated, either by the local agency or the agency in the state of origin.

Recovered children should be asked: Why did you go? What happened? How can we help?

Investigators of parental kidnappings should keep in mind that recovery of the child is only part of the objective. A criminal case against the abductor must be successfully pursued in court. Witnesses, evidence, and victims should be prepared for the follow-through. The case can be closed after the child is recovered and the abducting parent is taken to court.

Parental Kidnapping Case Investigation Checklist

☐ **Document custody status.**

Obtain copy of notarized custody order.

Check with searching parent's attorney for any modifications.

Check with clerk of court with jurisdiction.

☐ **If available, interview abductor parent suspect.**

Determine if he or she has physical custody of the child.

Is child safe?

Obtain court order to take child if possible abduction is suspected.

☐ **Enter child into NCIC-MPF.**

If felony warrant has been issued, enter abductor parent in NCIC Wanted Persons File.

Cross reference entries in "Miscellaneous" fields.

☐ **Examine records (after proper authorization).**

Check telephone, bank, and credit card records of abducting parent.

Check employer, union and other occupational licensing records.

☐ **Refer searching parent to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and nonprofit organizations.**

☐ **Assist searching parent in developing a missing child poster.**

After obtaining warrant for the abductor parent, include a photograph and descriptive information of the abductor.

☐ **"Flag" child's records.**

Request school officials to notify law-enforcement if school records are requested.

Request health care providers to "flag" medical records and notify if requests are received.

Request Bureau of Vital Statistics to notify if requests for birth certificates are received.

Notify State Department to block request for passport and notify if application is received.

☐ **Contact Federal Parent Locator Service (FPLS) if case is at least six months old.**

Request a search of state PLS data bases.

Repeat every six months.

☐ **Fully load NCIC-MPF after the child has been missing thirty days.**

Dental and medical records

Fingerprints

Complete physical description

☐ **Make additional records checks.**

Credit bureau

Endorsements on government checks

Possible reference requests

Pension fund change of address

☐ **Plan for the recovery of the child.**

Obtain pick-up order for the child.

Notify child protective service workers about potential need for shelter care.

Coordinate with clearinghouse in state in which child is recovered.

If necessary, contact National Center for Missing and Exploited Children for assistance in arranging transportation for searching parent.

☐ **Take abductor into custody away from child if possible.**

☐ **Interview the child.**

What happened while abducted?

Did any abuse occur before abduction or while abducted?

☐ **Delete NCIC entries.**

4. Nonfamily Abductions

The least common but most dreaded kind of missing child case is the *nonfamily abduction*. In these cases, a nonfamily member whose identity is unknown to the parents abducts the child. Be aware that a change in the status of the case may occur—a child who is originally reported as voluntarily missing may be abducted while on the street.

Intensive Investigation

There are two considerations in addressing a nonfamily abduction case. The first and foremost is the safe recovery of the child. The second, equally vital, consideration is the building of the case against the abductor. Neither consideration should be overlooked. Time is a crucial factor in responding to nonfamily abduction cases. THE CHILD SHOULD ALWAYS BE CONSIDERED ENDANGERED WHEN ABDUCTED BY AN UNKNOWN INDIVIDUAL. Every appropriate resource available to the law-enforcement agency should be mobilized to deal with such cases.

A child abducted by an unknown individual is considered to be in great danger.

Set Up a Command Post As soon as the police suspect that the child has been abducted by a stranger, a command post (CP) should be established *away from the child's home*. An officer should be stationed at the home and should maintain contact with the command post via radio communication. The officer will be able to inform the CP of the child's return home or of a ransom demand. If the child is found, the officer will be able to tell the family. If the child is found hurt or dead, the officer should be discreet in informing the parents. Obviously it would be a disservice to family if they were to hear this information first from the media or from a loudspeaker in the patrol car in the front driveway.

The command post has the responsibility of ensuring that all bases are covered in the investigation. All assignments pertaining to the case will originate from the command post, and all information generated will be processed through it. Media information and press notices will originate there. In short, the person in charge of the command post must have the authority to marshal necessary resources or have immediate access to, and support of, the police chief or sheriff.

Establish clear-cut lines of authority and responsibility.

Some cases demand the combined resources of more than one police agency. In these cases, agencies participating in the task force should designate a commander for the operation. This person shall be vested with authority to make assignments and coordinate the participation of all agencies involved. Unless clear-cut lines of authority are established, the investigation could be threatened by chaos. In areas in which this is likely, law-enforcement and other public safety agencies should develop policies and procedures governing joint operations to be used when the need arises.

Staffing for the CP should consist of a team with a supervisor, investigative coordinator, search coordinator, media specialist, communications specialist, logistics specialist, and clerk/typist. Each of these persons has specific responsibilities, as indicated below:

Supervisor Directs all activities relating to the recovery of the child and the investigation of the crime; makes decisions on the level of resources necessary for the immediate reaction of the law-enforcement agency; functions as the liaison with other area and federal law-enforcement agencies on this case; and coordinates the release of information to the press and public.

Investigative Coordinator Has direct control of the law-enforcement personnel assigned to collect evidence, interview witnesses, and build the case that may eventually have to stand the scrutiny of a criminal trial; reviews the supplemental reports submitted by investigators; and briefs the CP supervisor.

Search Coordinator Has responsibility for the activities undertaken to find the child, including liaison with the National Guard, volunteer search and rescue groups, and other law-enforcement and public safety agencies that may be used in the search; assigns search teams; briefs search teams about the procedures to use; and maintains the search map.

Each member of the command post staff has specific duties.

Media Specialist Has responsibility for rumor control and for securing active assistance from the public, including providing accurate information to the press and to the public about the status of the search and any elements of the case that may be made public; works closely with the CP supervisor; and serves as a liaison between law-enforcement and the public.

Communications Specialist Maintains radio and telephone communications among the CP, the search and the investigative teams, the officer assigned to the victim's home, and headquarters; and keeps a log of the activities.

Logistics Specialist Makes arrangements for obtaining necessary equipment and supplies. In prolonged operations this responsibility will include meals for searchers and cots for CP personnel needed to maintain around-the-clock presence.

Clerk/Typist Performs necessary clerical support functions, including the maintenance of a master case file in which a copy of the initial report and all supplemental reports are placed after being logged.

The command post should control and coordinate all investigative activities. An activities log should be maintained and all activities carefully recorded. A situation board should be set up and a record kept of all searchers, including their assignments to search teams. The CP should use a sector map with an acetate overlay, marking areas as search assignments are made and marking them again when the assignments are completed. Areas covered by ground search teams should be marked differently from those searched by air units.

Mobilization of Non-Police Personnel The search coordinator is responsible for determining the number of non-police personnel needed to search for the child. Consideration should be given to the use of scout groups, neighbors, fire rescue units, and neighborhood watch patrols. The search coordinator makes the assignments for conducting the search and explains the procedures if the child is found. Searchers must be told that the first concern is for the health and care of the child and that all information about the police investigation is confidential. Requests for information should be referred to the media specialist.

Ground Searches Ground searches must be performed in a thorough and careful manner. Unfortunately, the remains of many missing children have been recovered in areas that supposedly were "searched," often close to the point the child was last seen or near the child's home. The CP must log in everyone in the search

area, including law-enforcement personnel, and check each searcher's identification against a photo identification: driver's license, military identification, or other similar source. Information in searcher logs should be maintained for possible background checks.

To perform a ground search, the command post should divide the search area into grids. Each grid will be assigned to a "squad" or team to be searched. The squad leader should be a law-enforcement officer trained in ground search techniques. Team members should be spaced no more than ten yards apart. Each team member should wear a numbered "Day-Glo" vest or other visible means to identify him or her as a registered searcher.

For a thorough search of a grid, the search must be carried out in all four compass directions. First, line up the searchers along one boundary, the north edge, for example. The searchers then slowly search from north to south. Once that pass has been completed, line up the searchers along the south edge and search from south to north. The next pass will be from east to west and then from west to east. Remember, the ground looks different from each direction. Searchers should be told to look for anything that may be a clue—clothing parts, jewelry, body parts, bones, freshly disturbed earth (or in older cases, earth mounds or depressions). They should be instructed to call the squad leader if they find anything and NOT TO HANDLE ANY EVIDENCE. If anything that may be even tenuously related to the case is spotted, the line of searchers should stop IN PLACE. Once the evidence is processed, the line continues.

During the search, preserve forensic evidence and maintain discipline.

Relatives should not be permitted to participate in the search but should be asked to remain at the command post. Remember that, just as in arson cases, the abductor often returns to assist with and possibly mislead the search. It is good practice to assign searchers to areas and not to allow them to pick their own. Two or more searchers should be assigned to look in buildings, caves, or other structures. When searching the same area again, the CP should assign different searchers. Such procedures minimize the the possibility of the abductor being the only person to search a hiding place. The investigator needs to "think like a kidnapper" and examine scenes and locales in the area where a child's body may be deposited.

The search should be conducted so as to take into account the possibility that the child wandered away or was the victim of an accidental death. If the child is alive, the search may frighten him or her, and the child may attempt to avoid the searchers. Calling the child's name may alleviate fears. In at least one case, when a missing child was found, he was asked why he had not answered the calls of the searchers. His response was that he had been taught not to talk to strangers.

When the searchers find the child, medical personnel should be called, emergency first aid rendered, if necessary, and the child evacuated to the hospital. Steps must be taken, however, to protect the evidence that may be available around the child at the scene. Searchers not needed for first aid should cordon off the area, limiting access until the investigators arrive. A tremendous amount of discipline is required, as the human tendency is to crowd around the child and contaminate the area. The CP supervisor should assign a police representative to each search team in order to enforce discipline, preserve forensic evidence, and protect the scene from contamination.

Air Searches In some cases, the area to be searched is too large or too rugged for a ground search. In these cases, an air search using aerial photography may be useful. Because most law-enforcement agencies may not have the necessary equipment, they might check with the adjutant general of the state's National Guard to help make arrangements for the special infrared equipment necessary. The "prompting term" to facilitate these arrangements is "training mission." Apparently National Guard and reserve units need to conduct a minimum number of hours of training, and a search provides a good opportunity for fulfilling this requirement. Photographs of a ten-mile diameter from the crime scene are needed.

Infrared or heat-sensitive photography will disclose any body from which heat is being released, including rocks and dead animals as well as people.

Water Searches Tidal waters and non-tidal waters require very different kinds of searches. The direction of the tide at the time of the disappearance will determine where the body may be located. If the tide is coming in, the body is likely to be found upstream and not downstream as may normally be expected. If the tide is going out, a body quite often will lodge itself on the bottom and dislodge itself when the tide comes back in. In tidal rivers and streams, the body will usually be found within a mile of the point that the body entered the water.

In non-tidal rivers, the key areas to search are bends in the river, especially if time has passed and it is presumed that the body is now floating. Other places to search include places with much debris and sand or mud bars.

The temperature of the water is a key factor in developing the water search strategy. When water is cold, the growth of bacteria within the body will be impeded, and the body will not float. In warmer water, bacterial growth is accelerated and the resulting gases cause the body to float. The bodies of victims who drown in the summer may be found within one to three days, in contrast to one to three months in the winter.

Since water searches involve potential hazards to searching divers, priority should be given to the safety of the diver over the recovery of a body.

Note: For a more thorough discussion of search techniques, please consult your department's procedural guide or criminal investigation texts.

Patrol Activities The CP supervisor decides how best to allocate patrol forces assigned to the search during the period of time in which the CP is in operation—usually the first 72–96 hours after the abduction. Patrol officers may be assigned to the search operation or to the investigation of the case. As law-enforcement officers, the patrol personnel are uniquely trained to question witnesses, conduct building searches, and report on these activities. The particular circumstances of the case will dictate the most efficient and effective use of the patrol officers assigned to assist with the missing child case.

In most departments, it may be necessary to hold officers for a double shift or to call in off-duty officers and assign them to the missing child search and investigation. Patrol officers should be assigned to conduct door-to-door searches and ask, "Were you anywhere near this location?" and "What did you see?"—*not* "Did you see anything unusual?" The CP supervisor should coordinate these arrangements with the patrol division commander in accordance with departmental policies. Through the patrol division chain of command, the officers not working the case can be assigned to follow up leads in their regular patrol areas, in addition to being on the lookout for the child and the suspected abductor. Photographs or posters should be distributed to patrol officers (*see* Appendix 1, page 39).

It is extremely important that routine patrol be maintained in the area. Patrol officers assigned to the area from which the child was abducted should be instructed to look for any deviation from their area's normal condition. This would include running NCIC checks on automobiles that appear to be abandoned or that have been parked in the same spot for a long period of time. Any cars that appear suspicious should be thoroughly examined by the patrol officer. All calls for service should be examined for a possible relationship to the missing child case. If the department has a crime analysis unit, it may be able to determine if the offense fits into any kind of crime pattern in the area.

The patrol officers from the child's neighborhood and school should be asked about any activity that may be related to the abduction—for example, complaints of a "peeping tom," an individual lurking around a park or playground, or a burglary with no apparent theft.

Investigators' Responsibilities Under the leadership of the investigative coordinator, the investigators assigned to the case should concentrate their

efforts on finding the perpetrator. This entails interviewing witnesses; following up on leads; monitoring the parents' telephone line; crime scene processing; and using records and police intelligence sources as well as crime analysis to identify, locate, and apprehend the suspected abductor. Resources the investigator should use are physician and pediatric records. Such evidence, which can be secured by subpoena, may be critical in the intensive investigation to provide a complete understanding of the circumstances surrounding the child's disappearance. The investigator should also examine the child abuse registry and other reports that may have been filed concerning the family of the missing child.

Consider a polygraph of the parents and other caretakers early in the investigation.

The officer should consider the possibility that another family member or someone else close to the missing child is responsible for the disappearance and possible death of the child. Unless the parents (or other family members and caretakers) can be positively eliminated as participants in the crime, they should be given polygraphs at the outset of the investigation. Conducted early on, this procedure may help provide valuable leads and lessen the chance of having to do it later when it could be perceived as accusatory.

Officers should go door to door, person to person, as in the cases of Johnny Gosch and Eugene Martin, paper boys from Des Moines, Iowa, who were abducted from their own neighborhoods. Simply to ask if anyone "saw anything unusual" is not sufficient, however. The witnesses may believe that they have seen absolutely nothing that is unusual in the course of daily events. A search for witnesses should be conducted 24 hours, 48 hours, and 7 days after the occurrence in order to produce individuals whose daily activities may have brought them in contact with the scene. Again, officers should know that the proper questions to ask are "Were you anywhere near this location at that time?" and "What did you see?"—*not*, "Did anything unusual happen?"

Investigators should check with and inform hospitals, cab companies, and other jurisdictions. Recent crime reports from the involved jurisdiction need to be analyzed, as do reports from nearby areas. Any reported crime against a child should be examined for a relationship to the abduction being investigated. The investigators should look for similarities in size, age, physical appearance, and sex of the victims. Many cases in which children were abducted are not listed as abductions because the victims escape or were found murdered. In these cases the offense may be reported as a sexual molestation or homicide.

Individuals with a past history of child sexual molestation should be interviewed. Priority should be given to those whose victims' appearance and developmental stage most nearly corresponds to that of the missing child.

Claim of Home Birth Investigators should be alert to the possibility that a child abductor can present a baby to an agency issuing vital records, claim that the baby was born at home, and obtain a birth certificate for the baby—without any investigation of the legitimacy of the claim of home birth. In cases of infants abducted by nonfamily members, investigators may want to check with all the agencies in a given geographical area to determine if they have issued a birth certificate to such a child who matches the requisite age, gender, ethnic background, and so on.

Note: Information about state organizations maintaining birth records is available from the National Center for Health Statistics in Washington, D.C. (202) 436-8500.

A ransom demand is not necessary for FBI involvement.

FBI Assistance Since the widely publicized Lindbergh kidnapping, the FBI can become involved in kidnapping cases. While the public has traditionally thought of FBI involvement only in cases of interstate transportation of the victim or in cases in which a ransom has been demanded, neither of these circumstances is necessary for FBI assistance. The FBI Director, in a memorandum issued in February 1983 to all FBI field offices, states:

In accord with existing instructions, the following is set forth:

A. When reports are brought to your attention, without regard for the means of referral, of minors abducted or missing under circumstances indicating a possible abduction, unaccompanied by ransom demand or evidence of interstate transportation or travel, insure the following:

1. Advise FBI Headquarters immediately.
2. Furnish a teletype setting forth specific details bearing upon abduction or circumstances indicating a possible abduction, any ransom demand, interstate transportation and your action. Mere statements that the "local authorities advise no evidence of abduction exists" are not acceptable.
3. Determine if it is necessary to institute a preliminary inquiry immediately in order to ascertain the need for a full investigation.
4. Resolve questions pertaining to the abduction, seizure, confinement, inveiglement, decoy, kidnap, or carrying away by any means whatsoever, through the conduct of a preliminary inquiry in accord with existing Attorney General guidelines.
5. Note that no ransom demand is necessary.
6. Note that interstate travel can be assumed after 24 hours from the time the minor was abducted or missing under circumstances indicating a possible abduction.

B. Complete documentation is required as to the facts and circumstances which cause you to conduct or not to conduct a full investigation. Include any United States Attorney's opinion and the specific liaison effected with local authorities together with any requests that local authorities, citizens or family members may make and your action thereafter.

This memorandum is explicit in the requirements that the FBI field offices are expected to fulfill when informed of a possible abduction. Local law-enforcement agencies should always inform the FBI of the abduction report and collaborate on the investigation. The Bureau has resources and technical capabilities not available in most local agencies that can be applied in the investigation of a suspected abduction.

Fully load information into the NCIC-MPF.

NCIC Reporting Completing the entries in the NCIC file should be done as soon as possible after an abduction. The file should be fully loaded with medical and dental information within the first two weeks. By establishing this as part of the investigative routine, the investigator will not need to arouse the fears of the parents if an unidentified body is found and the information is needed by the medical examiner.

Summary: Intensive Investigation of Nonfamily Abduction Cases The most dreaded kind of abduction is that in which a nonfamily member is the perpetrator. Fortunately, this kind of case appears to be unusual—but when it occurs, an immediate response and mobilization of law-enforcement resources are required. IN EVERY NON-FAMILY ABDUCTION CASE, THE CHILD SHOULD BE CONSIDERED ENDANGERED.

Once it has been established that the child is missing due to a possible abduction, the law-enforcement agency should establish a command post (CP) that will direct the efforts to find the child and begin to investigate the case. The effort has two purposes: to find the child and insure his or her safety and to find the perpetrator and establish the criminal case against him or her.

The CP supervisor will have total control of both aspects of the case, will determine the level of effort necessary, and will provide liaison with other local

and federal law-enforcement agencies. The police should inform the FBI of the abduction and consider using its technical and investigative skills.

Sustained Investigation

The investigator should work with the family to develop a poster with the child's pictures, physical description, date of abduction, and unique characteristics. A telephone number that can be used for sightings should be listed as well as any reward. (A suggested format is included on page 39.) This poster should be widely distributed to law-enforcement agencies, missing children's groups, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, truck stops, the media, and any other organization that might give exposure to the poster.

The FBI should always be consulted. The Bureau has technical expertise that could help in the investigation. For example, in longstanding cases, the FBI can process photos to show aging and physical development.

As frustrating as it may be for the investigator, it is important to continue to try to develop new leads and to follow up on any new information. The family of the missing child deserves to know the fate of the child, even if that fate is death.

***Contact the National Center for assistance in generating leads:* 1-800-843-5678.**

Law-enforcement agencies should refer searching parents to local support groups for other services. Contact the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children for a listing of support services in your state.

Follow-up and Close-out

Upon recovering a child abducted by a stranger, investigators should have two primary concerns: the health and safety of the child, and the apprehension and prosecution of the abductor. Nothing must take priority over the health and well-being of the child. The investigative process should not further victimize him or her. This requires some degree of sensitivity on the part of the investigator.

In any interview with the child, the investigator should include the presence of the parents or a friend. The site for the interview should be one in which the child can feel relaxed and undistracted. The length of time for any interviewing session should be appropriate for the age and interest span of the child. **Always use extreme caution in deciding whether to videotape interviews with the victim. If possible, avoid videotaping the initial interviews.**

Do not further victimize the child during the interview process.

The investigator should find out what happened during the time the child was missing and obtain as much information as possible about the abductor. The child should be asked to provide detailed descriptions of the abductor(s), the locations where the child was held, vehicles in which they traveled, and other factors that link the child with the suspected abductor(s). This kind of investigation is required, even if the abductor is in custody. For example, offenses may have occurred in multiple jurisdictions.

A physical examination should be conducted and any injuries documented for later use as evidence. Laboratory samples indicating sexual abuse should also be preserved for later use as evidence. The child's clothing should be kept and examined for trace evidence.

In the unfortunate event that the abducted child is found dead, the investigation should proceed as in any homicide.

Nonfamily Abduction Case Investigation Checklist

☐ **Set up command post away from the child's home.**

Station officer at child's home.

Assign responsibilities.

Mobilize resources.

Search and rescue teams

Fire department

Other law-enforcement agencies in the region

☐ **Conduct search.**
ID and log in searchers; issue search ID.
Assign teams for search.
Carefully conduct grid search of ground.
Air search in ten-mile diameter from home or scene of disappearance.
Contact National Guard for infrared aerial photography.
Maintain discipline among ground searchers.

☐ **Locate and interview witnesses.**
Conduct door-to-door searches (neighborhood canvass).
Conduct building searches.

☐ **Maintain routine patrol in the area of the disappearance.**
Look for any deviation from "normal."
Conduct NCIC checks on suspicious vehicles.
Conduct NCIC checks on suspicious persons.
Analyze calls for service to determine possible relationship to abduction.

☐ **Concentrate on finding perpetrator.**
Interview witnesses.
Follow up on leads.
Monitor parents' telephone line.
Process crime scene.
Check child's medical records.
Check crime reports from nearby jurisdictions.
Contact hospitals and cab companies.

☐ **Polygraph parents and other family members/guardians.**

☐ **Seek FBI assistance.**
Crime scene profiling
Forensic analysis
VICAP

☐ **Report to NCIC.**
Fully load NCIC Missing Persons File within two weeks.
Be sure that child is listed as "Endangered."

☐ **Develop and distribute poster of missing child.**
Use color, if possible.
Have two or three different pictures of the child.
Consider age enhancement after three years.

☐ **Be vigilant in search for other child victim crimes with similar characteristics.**

☐ **Interview the child.**
What offenses took place?
Where offenses took place (jurisdictions)?
Use caution in deciding whether to videotape the interviews with the child.
Do not further victimize the child.

☐ **In recovery of a deceased child:**
Determine cause of death.
Investigate as any possible homicide.

Unknown Missing Cases

Not every case can be readily classified. Cases in which the facts are insufficient to determine the cause of the child's disappearance are called *unknown missing*

cases. In many such cases, the only fact apparent is that there is a missing child. WITHOUT ANY FACTS THAT INDICATE OTHERWISE, HOWEVER, THE POLICE AGENCY SHOULD ASSUME THAT THE CHILD IS ENDANGERED AND ACT ACCORDINGLY.

Intensive Investigation The investigative steps for unknown missing cases are the same as those taken for the other three kinds of missing child cases. If any of the unusual circumstances listed on pages 1–2 exist, establishing a command post and conducting an extensive search should be normal law-enforcement practice.

The unknown missing case needs to be analyzed to determine if there are other traceable pieces of evidence. For example, if the youth is of driving age, was an automobile involved? If so, the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) should be run through the NCIC system. Did the youth have jewelry of value that may be unique or traceable? Do not overlook any potential lead.

The local police department should not establish an arbitrary waiting period before taking action. The longer the police agency hesitates, the longer the child is endangered and the greater the distance that the abductor, if there is one, can put between himself and the investigating agency.

NCIC Reporting The police should complete the entries in the NCIC Missing Persons File as soon as possible after a child is determined missing due to unknown circumstances. The file should be fully loaded with medical and dental information within the first two weeks. By establishing this as part of the investigative routine, the investigator will not need to arouse the fears of the parents if an unidentified body is found and the information is needed by the medical examiner.

Do not wait—act!

Sustained Investigation Until facts are developed that narrow the case, all options should be repeatedly explored. Friends and relatives of the missing child should be given instructions to tell the investigator if contacted by the missing child or the child's abductor. Posters with the child's picture, description, and a telephone number to call for sightings should be circulated. All medical and dental information should be loaded into the NCIC computer so that if a body is found or if the child is unable to give identity, a match can be made.

Assume that the child is in danger until the facts contradict this.

The investigator should consider the possibility that another family member or someone close to the missing child is responsible for the disappearance and possible death of the child. A polygraph examination of parents could lead to the resolution of the case at the outset.

Follow-up and Close-Out When a child in an unknown missing case is recovered, the investigator must determine the cause of the disappearance. Once the cause is determined—voluntary, parental kidnapping, non-family abduction, or other, such as accidental injury—the investigator proceeds as usual.

If the child is dead, seriously injured, or otherwise unable to explain what happened, the investigator will need to derive an explanation through investigative and forensic techniques. The investigating officer may want to ask the FBI to develop a crime scene profile. To seek the FBI's assistance, please contact the local FBI field office and ask for the field profiling coordinator.

Crime scene profiling is not an exact science, but through the presence of clues and an understanding of human nature, the profiler can get a feel for the scene and project scenarios for what may have happened. Further investigation is necessary to validate their hypotheses.

5. National Crime Information Center (NCIC)

The National Crime Information Center (NCIC) is an automated data base maintained by the FBI. It provides criminal justice and law-enforcement information to federal, state, and local law-enforcement agencies throughout this country, Canada, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. The system operates around the clock every day of the year. In NCIC, vast amounts of data are stored on wanted persons, stolen property—including automobiles—and documented criminal history information on individuals. This information can be retrieved immediately and furnished through an NCIC terminal to any authorized criminal justice agency.

There are two files of particular interest to investigators of missing child cases:

The Missing Persons File (MPF)

The Unidentified Persons File (UPF)

The following sections provide instructions on how to use these files, how to enter missing child cases, how to make inquiries about missing child cases, how to enter unidentified persons, and how to delete cases. Information is also included on other NCIC files that will be useful in the investigation of missing child cases.

Missing Persons File

The *Missing Persons File (MPF)* of the NCIC system contains information on individuals meeting the following FBI criteria:

These are to be entered into the NCIC-MPF.

Disability A person of any age who is missing and under proven physical or mental disability or is senile—thereby subjecting himself or herself or others to personal and immediate danger.

Endangered A person of any age who is missing and in the company of another person under circumstances that could endanger his or her physical safety.

Involuntary A person of any age who is missing under circumstances indicating that the disappearance was not voluntary—*i.e.*, abduction or kidnapping.

Juvenile A person of any age who is missing and declared unemancipated as defined by the laws of his or her state of residence and does not meet any of the other criteria for inclusion in the Missing Persons File.

Catastrophe A person of any age who is missing after a disaster.

It is important to note that no time delay is required for an entry to be accepted into the Missing Persons File. In addition, runaways CAN and SHOULD be entered into the system.

Essential Information In order for an entry to be accepted into the Missing Persons File, the following information is essential:

Message Key This item gives the kind of entry into the file—*i.e.*, disabled, endangered, involuntary, juvenile, or victim (catastrophe).

The National Center's ORI is DC001069W.

Originating Agency Identifier (ORI) This code identifies the agency making the entry and provides a responding agency with an address for NLETS messages regarding the case. The ORI for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children is #DC001069W.

Name of the child

Sex

Race

Date of birth

Date of emancipation

Height

Weight

Hair color

Date missing

Originating agency case number

There is no limit on supplemental entries into NCIC.

The entry of the above items will enable the NCIC system to accept the missing child's case. These items do not by any means, however, constitute a complete entry. There is no limit to the number of supplemental information entries that may be made to the Missing Persons File as additional information becomes available. Family members should be given a packet of forms to provide medical and dental information. The more complete the information in the Missing Persons File, the more useful it becomes as a tool to aid in the positive identification of the missing person. (*See* Appendix 2, page 40, for the Missing Person Report form for NCIC entry.)

Unidentified Persons File

The MPF and UPF are compared daily.

The *Unidentified Persons File (UPF)* of the NCIC system provides information on unidentified bodies or parts of bodies that have been found or on individuals that cannot identify themselves due to handicap, amnesia, or age. (*See* Appendix 3, page 41, for Unidentified Person Report form.)

The information that should be entered in the UPF parallels the information that is entered on missing persons and thereby enables matches to be made each day by computer comparisons. This system became operational on June 30, 1983, and the number of unidentified persons has been increasing as more agencies, especially medical examiners, participate in the program. *Note*: MPF and UPF files are automatically fully correlated nightly at FBI headquarters with possible matches forwarded to both ORIs.

Dental Records The entry of dental records in both the Missing Persons File and the Unidentified Persons File is extremely important in matching identities. For children who have been dead for a long period and whose fingerprints have decomposed, dental records provide the best means of identification. The Unidentified Persons File provides the opportunity to make a computer comparison of dental records and represents a major time saver. There is room in the file to indicate 256 dental characteristics through the use of an alpha-numeric code.

Entry in the System The state laws on investigative authority govern the entry of the information into the NCIC Unidentified Persons File. Entry may be made by the investigator assigned to the case or by the medical examiner's office. The American College of Forensic Pathologists has undertaken a project to enter the backlog of unidentified bodies throughout the country into the system in hope of resolving their identities.

Other NCIC System Files

In addition to the Missing and Unidentified Persons files, the investigator of missing child cases needs to be aware of the existence of other NCIC files.

NCIC is a powerful law-enforcement tool.

The Wanted File This file contains identifying information on persons with outstanding arrest warrants. In parental kidnappings, the name of the PARENT should be entered in this file when a warrant is issued. The CHILD should be entered in the Missing Persons File.

Stolen Vehicle File If a vehicle as well as a child are missing, the owner of the vehicle may request that the automobile be listed as stolen so that it may be used to trace the missing child.

Summary: NCIC System

The NCIC system is a powerful tool for law-enforcement agencies to use in the investigation of missing child cases. It is important that the information be entered accurately and completely. The more information that is entered on a missing child and later on an unidentified child, the more likely it is that the system will produce a match.

From 1980 to 1986 NCIC-MPF usage increased 340%.

Case History

The following is a true story. Only the names and locations have been changed to protect the parties involved.

Ricky is a fifteen-year-old mentally retarded youth who lives with his father in a suburban area on the eastern coast of the United States. One morning in the middle of August, Ricky and some of his friends took the train into the city. Upon arrival, the friends gave Ricky some money and told him to return home. Due to his mental handicap and his inability to communicate in English, Ricky was incapable of getting himself home and became lost. When he did not return home, his father became worried and called the local police department to report the child missing.

The police department took the report from the father and told him not to worry because most children show up sooner or later, usually unharmed. The department filed the report but did not enter it into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) computer system operated by the FBI.

Ricky's father became distraught and every spare moment was spent looking for his lost son. He had flyers printed and handed them out at transit stops. He

also searched himself, walking for miles around the area in which his son was last seen. This went on for several months.

In early March, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children was contacted by an organization that had been helping the father. The National Center contacted the police department in the boy's home town and, after finding out that the NCIC information had not been entered, encouraged the department to make the entry. The father gave permission for Ricky's picture to be used in the Center's media exposure program. On April 21, Ricky's picture was aired on a news broadcast. The following morning the Center's hotline received a report that a boy who looked like the one in the picture shown on television was in a children's center—AND HAD BEEN IN THE CENTER SINCE SEPTEMBER 5, ALMOST A FULL EIGHT MONTHS.

Children are found alive.

Ricky had been found by a police agency in the city and since he was unable to identify himself, he was placed in the children's center. The police agency had not made an entry in the NCIC Unidentified Persons File of the FBI.

Because of the law-enforcement agencies' handling of this case, a young man was separated from his family for several months, a family was disrupted and experienced months of uncertainity and grief, and the city that operates the children's center spent almost $25,000 in housing the child, who should have been returned to his father almost immediately.

There are over 1,400 entries in the Unidentified Persons File, of which many are juveniles. Somewhere in the country, law-enforcement agencies have these children in their own missing persons files, and until they are properly entered into the system, the cases will remain unsolved.

6. Police/Social Worker Teams

The investigation of missing child cases is most effective when an interdisciplinary approach is used, combining the investigatory expertise of the police officer with the counseling and interpersonal skills of the social worker. In addition to the traditional law-enforcement approach, the missing child problem can be dealt with either as a manifestation of family dysfunction (as in many runaway cases and parental kidnappings) or as a family tragedy (in nonfamily abductions or unknown missing cases).

Intrinsic to the police/social worker team approach is the philosophy that *the child is a victim*. Normally, case information received from a youth client will not be used for the purpose of prosecuting the youth.

Research has shown a *cycle of violence* in which family violence and molestation, missing episodes, and exploitation of a child result in the child's turning to the exploitation and physical harm of others as maturation occurs. The traditional approach of taking the child into custody and returning him or her to the home does nothing to address the causes of the problem, to resolve it effectively so to prevent recurrence, or to interrupt the cycle that thus far appears to produce new generations of child exploiters and their victims.

Missing children can provide police intelligence.

In addition, children who have been missing and are recovered provide a valuable source of law-enforcement intelligence. Through the involvement of social workers with proven interviewing skills, information about how the child survived and with whom the child associated can be obtained for analysis and follow-up by law-enforcement authorities.

In this chapter, the formation and operation of a police/social worker team for missing and exploited children is presented. The model that is described is patterned after the Exploited and Missing Child Unit (EMCU) of Jefferson County and Louisville, Kentucky. The information concerning the operations of such a unit is condensed from the unit's organizational descriptions and procedures, dated March 1, 1984. Their experience proves that the concept can and does work. The concept is viable even if the agencies involved cannot support a full-time Exploited/Missing Child Task Force (E/MCTF). The agencies should establish interagency agreements that define cooperative relationships between child protective services and law-enforcement personnel.

Organization and Structure

The *police/social worker team* involves existing law-enforcement and social services agencies pooling their resources and working together to meet the needs of the community and of their clients. In this arrangement, each participating agency assigns personnel to a task force. Police officers and social workers maintain their status and authority as employees of their agencies. Experience has shown, however, that the team is most effective when it is located in neutral quarters rather than in either a police or social service agency.

By maintaining their identities and attachment to the parent agencies, members of the task force are able to facilitate delivery of services to the victims and the flow of information to other relevant components of participating

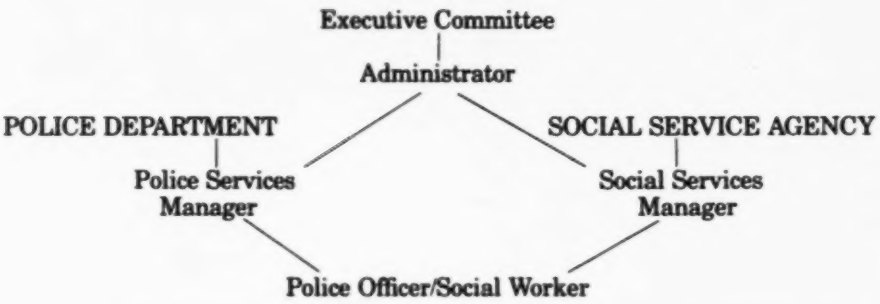
Establish written agreements between police and social service agencies.

agencies. For example, if the task force suspects child abuse on the basis of the interview of the child, the social worker may arrange for protective shelter care while the police may collect evidence to corroborate the allegations of abuse.

To establish a task force on missing and exploited children, the agencies must establish written agreements and make a commitment to the policies and procedures used by the task force as it performs official duties.

The following diagram depicts the structure of an Exploited/Missing Child Task Force (E/MCTF):

Organizational Chart, E/MCTF



As indicated by this chart, each agency assigns a supervisor to the task force. This person supervises the agency's task force members and is accountable to that agency. Each team consists of a police officer and a social worker who work all aspects of cases together. This relationship places both team members in roles that are not in their professional disciplines. The social worker goes on calls with the police officer, and the police officer participates in interviews with the social worker. Experience in Louisville has shown that as the team works together, it begin to build shared skills. The police officer picks up some of the social services skills, and the social worker begins to understand investigative techniques. In this working environment, standard operating procedure takes a back seat to the protection of the child victims.

Procedures

The initial reports of missing child cases should be taken by the police agency that normally would respond to the call for service. A patrol officer should be dispatched and a preliminary investigation made to verify that the child is missing. If any unusual circumstances (see pages 1–2) are suspected, the case should immediately be turned over to the E/MCTF for investigation. In cases where none of the unusual circumstances are thought to be present, the police agency taking the report works on the case and then turns it over to the E/MCTF the next day.

Receipt of Missing Child Case Upon assignment of a missing child case, the E/MCTF opens a case file on the juvenile. Information that is placed in the file should include the following:

a referral form (*see* Appendix 4, page 42)

social service information about the child and family, if available

a sequential case number for statistical/control purposes

verification of the NCIC entry by enclosure of the NCIC report printout

After the case file has been developed (clerical personnel can do this), the task force should contact the complaint source to verify the status of the case. Any discrepancies in the reports submitted to the task force should be checked at this time. The task force then forwards the file to a social work investigator for further contact with the family.

The social worker will make contact with appropriate personnel from the social services agency and juvenile court to determine any agency history with the family and any other pertinent information the agency may have on the youth. The social work investigator will be responsible also for brokering additional social services the family may need. A family member will be selected by the social worker as the primary contact for the case. After a thorough review of the case, the social worker will assess how much danger the youth is in and will suggest a course of action to the police manager.

In any case involving unusual circumstances, the on-call investigator will respond immediately. First, the case is to be entered into NCIC immediately. The E/MCTF investigator will assess the case to determine the level of case services needed. If additional resources are required, the on-call investigator will contact the police manager for authorization to proceed with the needed services. The police manager will coordinate the arrangements with the social services manager and inform him or her of the level of effort needed and the probable duration of the effort.

The child must be recovered to close the case.

Ongoing Case Activity Once assigned a case, the police/social worker team is expected to maintain a minimum level of contact with the case. The team is required to make a telephone contact with the primary contact person within the first twenty-four hours and a face-to-face contact within the first five days of the initial report to the law-enforcement agency. A recent color photograph of the missing child will be needed. If the law-enforcement agency taking the initial report has such a photo, it will be asked to send the picture to the task force for inclusion in the case file to aid in the identification of the youth.

All contacts with the family and other significant contacts will be recorded and maintained in the case file. If the case remains open for thirty days, the team will prepare a brief summary and forward it to the appropriate supervisory personnel. Such a summary will be updated every thirty days until the case is closed. **No case will be closed by any task force member until the youth has been located and such is verified by the assigned team, and an investigation of the child's disappearance has been completed.**

Cancel the NCIC entry.

Case Closure When a youth is located or returns on his or her own, the team must verify the return and location of the youth and close the case. The investigator will contact the originating agency to inform it that the E/MCTF has closed the case. The agency will be asked to cancel the NCIC report and to close out its police report. Finally the task force will complete its case file and update all its records.

In cases in which unusual circumstances were suspected, the child will be interviewed by the team to determine if exploitation or criminal abuse of the juvenile or other juveniles has occurred or was attempted. The team will advise the youth that any information given will not be used for the purpose of prosecution. If during the interview the team believes that further social services are needed, the social worker will be responsible for following up and facilitating the delivery of the needed services on a timely basis.

Any information indicating possible criminal activity beyond the scope of the E/MCTF will be given to the police services manager for determination of case responsibility for follow-up.

Social Worker Functions

Social workers are not police.

While the social worker assigned to the police/social worker teams may be vested with limited law-enforcement powers (such as probation officers), such authority is best exercised by the law-enforcement members of the E/MCTF. Social workers assigned to the task force should refrain from taking statements that are intended to be used for prosecutorial purposes. They also should not secure search warrants unless advised by the police officer assigned to the team or by the police services manager. Requests for evidentiary processes should originate from the law-enforcement members of the task force.

As a rule, social work members of the task force will refrain from arresting children in an emergency situation; however, children may be taken into custody and, at times, adults may have to be taken into custody to prevent danger to the child.

Social workers may assist their police team partners in arrest situations but ONLY under the express direction of the supervisor. In such situations, the social work member usually should be listed on the arrest slip as an expert witness and *not* as an arresting officer.

Social workers assigned to teams normally accompany their police officer counterparts on the service of search warrants to help secure any children found at the scene and to provide safe custody of those children during the search process. Only at the explicit request of the police officer/supervisor should the social worker assist in the search process except as a witness.

Summary: Police/Social Worker Teams

The police/social worker team concept is an effective merger of two separate yet related disciplines. The concept builds on the skills and roles inherent in each to address more effectively the complex issues involved in missing child cases.

The members of the Exploited/Missing Child Task Force are detailed by the law-enforcement and social services agencies and maintain their status with the parent agencies. This arrangement facilitates service delivery and support from the participating law-enforcement and social services organizations.

Children are to be treated as victims.

The philosophy behind the team concept is that children should be treated as victims and not as junior criminals. Concern is not only for the recovery of the child but also for the resolution of familial problems that may have contributed to the case. The team is also concerned about the mitigation of problems encountered while the child was missing.

Appendix 1

Have You Seen This Child?

WANTED:
Arrest Warrant Issued

MISSING CHILD

OPTIONAL
PHOTO
OF ABDUCTOR
(if warrant issued for arrest)

(Date of Photo)

CHILD'S PHOTO

(Date of Photo)

CHILD'S PHOTO, DIFFERENT ANGLE

(Date of Photo)

NAME OF ABDUCTOR

Date of Birth:
Ht.: Wt.:
Hair: Eyes:
Complexion:
Scars, etc.:
Occupation:
Car:

NAME OF CHILD

Date of Birth: Age:
Grade in School:
Ht.: Wt.: Hair: Eyes:
Complexion:
Scars, etc.:
Hobbies, sports, etc.:
Details of Abduction—Date, Place:
Indicate violation of court order, warrant on file.
Indicate if abuse has occurred.

IF YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Officer's Name, Police Department: Phone Number:
Case Number: Warrant Number (if secured):

NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
1-800-843-5678

39

Appendix 2

MISSING PERSON REPORT
FOR NCIC RECORD ENTRY

Date

Message Key (See definitions on page 1) (MKE)	Reporting Agency (ORI)	Name of Missing Person (NAM)
☐ Disability (EMD) ☐ Juvenile (EMJ) ☐ Endangered (EME) ☐ Victim (EMV) ☐ Involuntary (EMI) ☐ Caution		

Sex (SEX)	Race (RAC)	Place of Birth (POB)	Date of Birth (DOB)	Date of Emancipation (DOE)
☐ Male (M) ☐ Female (F)	☐ Asian or Pacific Islander (A) ☐ Unknown (U) ☐ Black (B) ☐ White (W) ☐ American Indian/Alaskan Native (I)			

Height (HGT)	Weight (WGT)	Eye Color (EYE)	Hair Color (HAI)	FBI Number (FBI)
		☐ Black (BLK) ☐ Hazel (HAZ) ☐ Blue (BLU) ☐ Maroon (MAR) ☐ Brown (BRO) ☐ Multicolored (MUL) ☐ Gray (GRY) ☐ Pink (PNK) ☐ Green (GRN) ☐ Unknown (XXX)	☐ Black (BLK) ☐ Brown (BRO) ☐ Blonde/Strawberry (BLN) ☐ Gray/Partially Gray (GRY) ☐ Red/Auburn (RED) ☐ White (WHI) ☐ Sandy (SDY) ☐ Unknown (XXX)	

Skin Tone (SKN)	Scars, marks, tattoos, and other characteristics (SMT) (See check list)	Fingerprint Classification* (FPC)
☐ Fair (FAR) ☐ Albino (ALB) ☐ Light (LGT) ☐ Olive (OLV) ☐ Black (BLK) ☐ Lt Brown (LBR) ☐ Ruddy (RUD) ☐ Dark (DRK) ☐ Medium (MED) ☐ Sallow (SAL) ☐ Dk Brown (DBR) ☐ Med Brown (MBR) ☐ Yellow (YEL)		

Other Identifying Numbers (MNU)	Social Security Number (SOC)	Operator's License Number (OLN)	Operator's License State (OLS)	Operator's License Year of Expiration (OLY)

Missing Person (MNP)	Date of Last Contact (DLC)	Originating Agency Case Number (OCA)	Miscellaneous (MIS) Include build, handedness, any illness or diseases, clothing description, hair description, etc.
☐ Missing Person (MP) ☐ Catastrophe Victim (DV)			

Miscellaneous Information

Below is a list of clothing and personal effects. Please indicate those items the missing person was last seen wearing. Include style, type, size, color, condition, labels, or laundry markings. (MIS)

Item	Style/Type	Size	Color	Markings	Item	Style/Type	Size	Color	Markings
Head Gear					Shoes/Boots/Sneakers				
Scarf/Tie/Gloves					Underwear				
Coat/Jacket/Vest					Bra/Girdle/Slip				
Sweater					Stockings/Pantyhose				
Shirt/Blouse					Wallet/Purse				
Pants/Skirt					Money				
Belts/Suspenders					Glasses				
Socks					Other				

LICENSE PLATE AND VEHICLE INFORMATION

License Plate Number (LIC)	State (LIS)	Year Expires (LIY)	License Plate Type (LIT)

Vehicle Identification Number (VIN)	Year (VYR)	Make (VMA)	Model (VMO)	Style (VST)	Color (VCO)

Does the missing person have corrected vision? (SMT)	Has missing person ever donated blood?	Has the missing person ever been fingerprinted? ☐ No ☐ Yes If so by whom?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Glasses ☐ Con Lenses	☐ No ☐ Yes Where?	

Blood Type (BLT)	Circumcision (CRC)	Footprints Available (FPA)	Body X-Rays (BXR)
☐ A Positive (APOS) ☐ B Positive (BPOS) ☐ AB Positive (ABPOS) ☐ O Positive (OPOS) ☐ A Negative (ANEG) ☐ B Negative (BNEG) ☐ AB Negative (ABNEG) ☐ O Negative (ONEG) ☐ A Unknown (AUNK) ☐ B Unknown (BUNK) ☐ AB Unknown (ABUNK) ☐ O Unknown (OUNK)	☐ Was (C) ☐ Unknown (U) ☐ Was not (N)	☐ Yes (Y) ☐ No (N)	☐ Full (F) ☐ None (N) ☐ Partial (P)

Corrective Vision Prescription (VRX)	Jewelry Type (See check list) (JWT)	Jewelry Description (JWL)

Aliases	Reporting Agency Telephone Number	Reporting Officer

Complainant's Name	Complainant's Address	Complainant's Telephone Number

Relationship of Complainant to Missing Person	Missing Person's Address	Missing Person's Occupation (MIS)

NCIC Number (NIC)	Places missing person frequented (MIS)

Close friends/relatives	Possible destination (MIS)

Investigating Officer and Telephone Number (MIS)	Complainant's Signature	Date

* Submit fingerprints to the FBI Identification Division, 10th and Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, D.C. 20537

6/85

Appendix 3

UNIDENTIFIED PERSON REPORT
FOR NCIC RECORD ENTRY

Date

Message Key (see definitions on page 1) (MKE)
☐ Unidentified Deceased (EUD)
☐ Unidentified Living (EUL)
☐ Unidentified Catastrophe Victim (EUV)

Reporting Agency (ORI)

Body Parts Status (SPS)
☐ Complete Body (ALL) ☐ Complete Skeleton (SKL)

Body Parts Status (if incomplete body or skeleton, see body diagram for coding corresponding parts) (BPS)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14

N - Not Recovered R - Recovered S - Skeletal

Sex (SEX)
☐ Male (M)
☐ Female (F)
☐ Unknown (U)

Race (RAC)
☐ Asian/Pacific Islander (A)
☐ Black (B)
☐ American Indian/Alaskan Native (I)
☐ White (W)
☐ Unknown (U)

Estimated Year of Birth Range (EYB)
☐☐☐☐-☐☐☐☐

Estimated Date of Death (EDD)

Date Body Found (DBF)

Approximate Height Range (HGT)
☐☐☐-☐☐☐

Approximate Weight Range (WGT)
☐☐☐-☐☐☐

Eye Color (EYE)
☐ Black (BLK) ☐ Brown (BRO) ☐ Hazel (HAZ) ☐ Pink (PNK)
☐ Blue (BLU) ☐ Gray (GRY) ☐ Maroon (MAR) ☐ Unknown (XXX)
☐ Green (GRN) ☐ Multicolored (MUL)

Hair Color (HAI)
☐ Black (BLK) ☐ Brown (BRO) ☐ Sandy (SDY)
☐ Blonde/Strawberry (BLN) ☐ Gray/Partially Gray (GRY) ☐ White (WHI)
☐ Red/Auburn (RED) ☐ Unknown (XXX)

Scars, Marks, Tattoos, and Other Characteristics (SMT)
(See attached Personal Descriptors check list)

Fingerprint Classification* (FPC)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20

Reporting Agency's Case Number (OCA)

Miscellaneous (MIS)
Information such as build, clothing description, handedness, weather conditions at the time of death, place where the body was found, etc. should be included. If additional space is needed, attach additional sheet **

Below is a list of clothing and personal effects. Please indicate those items that have been found with the person or body. Include style, type, size, color, condition, etc.

Item	Style/Type	Size	Color	Markings	Item	Style/Type	Size	Color	Markings
Head Gear					Shoes/Boots/Sneakers				
Scarf/Tie/Gloves					Underwear				
Coat/Jacket/Vest					Bra/Girdle/Slip				
Sweater					Stockings/Pantyhose				
Shirt/Blouse					Wallet/Purse				
Pants/Skirt					Money				
Belt/Suspenders					Glasses				
Socks					Other				
Other					Other				

Blood Type (BLT)
☐ A Positive (APOS) ☐ B Positive (BPOS) ☐ AB Positive (ABPOS) ☐ O Positive (OPOS)
☐ A Negative (ANEG) ☐ B Negative (BNEG) ☐ AB Negative (ABNEG) ☐ O Negative (ONEG)
☐ A Unknown (AUNK) ☐ B Unknown (BUNK) ☐ AB Unknown (ABUNK) ☐ O Unknown (OUNK)

Circumcision (CRC)
☐ Was (C) ☐ Unknown (U)
☐ Was not (N)

Footprints Available (FPA)
☐ Yes (Y) ☐ No (N)

Body X-Rays Available (BXR)
☐ Full (F) ☐ Partial (P) ☐ None (N)

Corrective Vision Prescription (VRX)

Manner of Death (CDA)
☐ Accidental (A) ☐ Natural Causes (N) ☐ Homicide (H) ☐ Suicide (S) ☐ Unknown (U)

Cause of Death (CDA)

Jewelry Type (See check list) (JWT)

Jewelry Description (JWL)

Medical Examiner/Coroner Agency Name and Case Number (MAN)

Medical Examiner/Coroner Locality (MAL)

Medical Examiner/Coroner Telephone Number (MAT)

NCIC Number (NIC)

Investigating Officer and Telephone Number (MIS)

*If fingerprints are available, submit a copy to the FBI, Identification Division, 10th and Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, D.C. 20537

**All dental information should be recorded on the dental report and entered in NCIC as a supplemental record.

Appendix 4

STAFF for Missing Children:

TASK FORCE on

EXPLOITED and MISSING CHILDREN

REFERRAL DATE:_____

REPORT #:_____

BY: JCPD ☐ LDP ☐

SHERIFF ☐ = _____

Other ☐ = _____

Sheriff's Radio:

NAME of MISSING CHILD:	DOB:	AGE:	SEX:	RACE:	B.W.: Yes ☐	WARRANT #
	SSN:	HT.:	WT.:	EYES:	HAIR:	
HOME ADDRESS: PHONE #: Zip:	Identifying MARKS: ☐ Photo Attached					

PARENT(s)/Guardian(s) Name(s):	Address(es):	Phone #(s):
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.

DATE MISSING: TIME:	Last Seen WEARING:	Personal Belongings Taken:
		Financial Status of Child:
SCHOOL: GRADE:	EMPLOYED AT: Phone #	

FREQUENTS: 1. 4. 7.
2. 5. 8.
3. 6. 9.

LAST SEEN AT: WITH WHOM:

Address: Phone:

VEHICLE Involved: Make: Model: License #: State: Year:	BUS: TRAIN: PLANE: Other:

LOCATOR LEADS:

DATE LOCATED/CANCELLED:_____

Special Instructions If Located:
- ☐ Return to Parent; Forward Report
- ☐ Take to Youth Center on Warrant
- ☐ Contact EMCU
- ☐ Other:_____

Copy Instructions per Color:
Blue Copy = Destroy After 15 Days
Pink Copy = Keep Until Cancelled
Green Copy = CANCELLATION all above.

COPY DISTRIBUTION & COLOR:_____

42

Appendix 5

Authorization to Use the FPLS

County/State

Application having been made to me

_____ on _____
Judge, Police Officer, or Prosecuting Attorney Date

I authorize the Federal Parent Locator Service (FPLS), through the

_____ Parent Locator Service, to
Name of State

submit the name of _____ _____
NAME SSN

to the FPLS.

This authorization is being made in regard to a parental kidnapping or child custody case.

I authorize this record search pursuant to 42 U.S.C. Section 663, and 45 CFR 303.15.

_____
Signature

_____
Title

_____
Date

If SSN is not known:

_____
Absent Parent's Complete Name

_____
Absent Parent's Date of Birth

_____
Absent Parent's Place of Birth

_____
Absent Parent's Father's Name (First, Middle Initial, Last)

_____
Absent Parent's Mother's Name (First, Middle Initial, Last)

State Clearinghouses

Alabama
Alabama Department of Public Safety
Missing Children Bureau
(205) 261–4207
(800) 228–7688 (in state)

Arkansas
Arkansas Office of the Attorney General
(501) 371–5028
(800) 482–8982 (in state)

Arizona
Arizona Department of Public Safety
Criminal Investigation Research Unit
(602) 262–8158

California
California State Department of Justice
(916) 739–5114
(800) 222–3463 (nationwide)

Colorado
Colorado Bureau of Investigation
(303) 239–4227

Connecticut
Connecticut State Police
(203) 238–6688
(800) 367–5678 (in state)

Delaware
Delaware State Police
(302) 736–5888

Florida
Florida Department of Law Enforcement
(904) 488–5224
(800) 342–0821 (in state)

Georgia
Georgia Bureau of Investigation
(404) 244–2554
(800) 282–6564 (in state)

Illinois
Illinois State Police
I-SEARCH
(217) 782–5227
(800) 843–5763 (in state)

Iowa
Iowa Department of Public Safety
(515) 281–7963;–3561
(800) 346–5507 (in state)

Kansas
Kansas Bureau of Investigation
(913) 232–6000
(800) 572–7463 (in state)

Kentucky
Kentucky State Police
Missing Child Information Center
(502) 227–8799
(800) 222–5555 (in state)

Louisiana
Louisiana State Police
(504) 925–6196

Maryland
Maryland Center for Missing Children
Maryland State Police
(301) 653–4412
(800) 637–5437 (nationwide)

Massachusetts
Massachusetts State Police
(800) 447–5269
(800) 622–5999 (in state)

Michigan
Michigan State Police
(517) 337–6171

Minnesota
Minnesota State Clearinghouse
(612) 296–6643

Mississippi
Mississippi State Highway Patrol
(601) 987–1599

Missouri
Missouri State Highway Patrol
(314) 751–3313, ext. 178

Montana
Montana Department of Justice
(406) 444–3817

Nevada
Nevada Office of the Attorney General
(702) 885–4170

New Hampshire
New Hampshire State Police
(603) 271–3636
(800) 525–5555 (in state)
New Hampshire Department of Human Services
(603) 271–4231

New Jersey
New Jersey State Police
(609) 882–2000

New York
New York Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS)
(518) 457–6051
(800) 346–3543 (in state)

North Carolina
North Carolina Division of Victim and Justice Services
(919) 733–7974
(800) 522–5437 (in state)

Ohio
Ohio Department of Education
(614) 466–6837

Oklahoma
Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation
(405) 682–6724

Pennsylvania
Pennsylvania State Police/Missing Persons Unit
(717) 783–5524;–5527

Rhode Island
Rhode Island State Police
(401) 647–3311, ext. 237
(800) 544–1144 (in state)

South Carolina
South Carolina Law-Enforcement Divison
(803) 737–9080
(800) 322–4453 (in state)

South Dakota
Attorney General's Office
(605) 773–4614

Tennessee
Tennessee Bureau of Investigation
(615) 741–0430

Texas
Texas Department of Public Safety
(512) 465–2814
(800) 346–3243 (in state)

Vermont
Vermont Office of the Attorney General
(802) 828–3171

Virginia
Virginia State Police
(804) 323–2026
(800) 822–4453 (in state)

Washington
Washington Crime Information Center (WACIC)
(206) 753–3960
(800) 543–5678 (in state)

National Clearinghouses

Canada
Royal Canadian Mounted Police
(613) 993–7425

United States
National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
(202) 634–9821
(800) 843–5678

Contents

Introduction

1. Phase One: Initial Response

2. Voluntary Missing Cases

3. Parental Kidnapping Cases

4. Nonfamily Abductions

5. National Crime Information Center (NCIC)

6. Police/Social Worker Teams

Appendix